The clans are of basic importance. They are the largest units of solidarity, and open conflict never occurs within them, as it would not between a man's clan and his wife's and mother's clan. It is through his clan that a man establishes his totemic relations and identifies himself with the sacred world by virtue of a mystical experience of his father. The mother is supposed to be spiritually fertilized by the entrance into her uterus of the infant's soul when it has come from the child's father's totemic well. Many ethnologists have insisted that the Australian aborigines have no knowledge of physiological conception. Although I held this opinion during the first part of my field work, I later came to the conclusion that knowledge of procreation is general to the Murngin but is considered of little importance.[4] 614 842

The blood feud is forever present and tends to kill a sufficient number of young men to allow the system of polygyny[a] to function. The Murngin have developed a number of well-constructed types of warfare which form dramatic episodes in the several chains of feuds linking the dead generations of the past to those of the living. 628 595

The moiety[a] is a still larger unit than the clan, dividing the sixty-odd clans into two groups which intermarry. By the device of the moiety, the whole of the life of the Murngin, as well as nature, is placed in two opposing groups called Yiritja and Dua. 616

A final important structure in Murngin society is the age-grading[a] institution. It divides, first, the men from the women (see page 131, Age Grading) on the basis of those who are initiated into the mysteries and those who are not, and then redivides the men on an age-graded scale based primarily on the place a man achieves within the rest of his social organization through *rites de passage*. 561

Within this social configuration the life of each Murngin male goes through an exact cycle. The first life crisis occurs when the Murngin soul, through the father's mystic experience, leaves the totemic well and enters the womb of the mother. By circumcision around the age of six to eight years the individual passes from the social status of a woman to that of a man. When at about the age of eighteen he achieves parenthood and is shown his totems for the first time, he goes to another, higher status; and to a still higher when, at about thirty-five, he sees the high totems. At death he passes through a very elaborate mortuary rite, returns to his totemic well, and the circle is complete. The personality before birth is purely spiritual; it becomes almost completely profane or unspiritual in the earlier period of its 842 852 [304] 884 775 761

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[4] See pages 23-25.

[a] See Glossary of Technical Terms.

851 It gives the father added bonds with waku (his sister's son) because
the latter becomes husband to the daughter; it strengthens his position
602 with daughter's son, who is waku to ego's son. A man prefers a son,
however, because of his value in the constant tribal feuds, not only
through his own assistance and the aid he brings to his relations (as,
of course, the daughter does through her marriage), but also because
almost the entire ceremonial life of the father's clan and tribe is
[428] centered around the males. A son inherits the right to perform certain
dances through his father and never through his mother. By a son's
initiation into the various ceremonies the father's social participation
is further increased as it would not be if the child were a daughter.*

614 Each clan has ceremonial leaders for one or all of the ceremonies it
owns. The leadership is inherited by the oldest son if he is old enough.
428 If not, the deceased father's next oldest brother inherits the right until
196 the son is old enough; or at the death or senility of the second brother
the son becomes leader. The course taken depends largely upon the
personalities of the two men, but in all events the son is looked upon
as the heir to these rights. Such ceremonial leadership makes of a
person a kind of clan headman.

852 When a boy is to be circumcised (at from six to nine years of age),
593 it is the father who decides the type of initiation ceremony. The
other old men of the tribe confer with him as to time, place, and
other arrangements. The father and the mother make presents to the
man who paints the child's body in preparation for the initiation.
868 The father is one of those who teach his son how to hunt, fight, and
conduct himself in the best possible way in the practical affairs of life.
593 If the father is a ceremonial leader he instructs his son in the routine of
songs, dances, and words that make up the great ceremonies.

852 Before the actual circumcision the neophyte is sent on a journey
593 through the country of the various clans to inform the people of the
coming ceremony and to collect presents. The father may refuse to
send his son if he wishes; or, if he wants the boy to go, he may order
him to leave and to take a certain route. No one else could do this.
861 A father never corrects his children. This is left to other kin (see
593 mari, nati, et cetera).

Fathers and sons often cooperate in making a canoe. A son must
593 always acquiesce in a father's request for the use of a canoe, or of any
[421] of the son's property. A father occupies a place much like an older

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* For a full account of the individual's change of status, see Chapter IV, Age Grading.

For a few days a mother carries her newborn child under her arm 854
in a strip of paper bark. At this time she covers it with charcoal to
make it turn black, for it is very light when born and it is thought [302
that it will stay that color unless so painted. In a short time she holds 856]
her infant on her shoulder, its legs straddling her neck and its arms
clinging to her head. She carries her children out into the bush with
her while she gathers the plants, or shell food, for the family larder.
When the little boy is about four years old he stays in camp with the 857
other little ones. But the young girls continue going with their 868
mothers, who during this early period start teaching them the countless
things they must know about the fauna and flora, the land and
the sea, in order to become good food-gatherers. When a boy is to be 852 ●
circumcised the mother always makes presents to the man who paints [431
his body for the ceremony. When the son kills his first kangaroo or 777]
emu, the bones are painted and she carries them as she does those of
a dead relative. This is to bring the son good luck in the hunt.

If the son's fathers are dead, the mother is sometimes consulted as
to the proper time to circumcise him. When the boy returns from his
journey to all the local clans, inviting them to come to his circumcision
ceremony, it is she who brags about the number of presents given
him. She always exaggerates because it is felt that this will also be
helpful for the son in acquiring the good things in later life. While [152]
he is being circumcised she cries and beats herself. The actions are
customary, but they are more than that to the mother, who is deeply
affected when she hears her son's cries. The sisters to the mother act [604
in the same way during this ceremony. A mother seldom corrects her 861]
child, this being left for mari and nati to do.

When a child is hurt or dead a mother always cuts and beats her 765
head to show her grief. After the child is buried she paints herself 302
with red ocher to cleanse herself of ceremonial impurity so that she
can go out for wood and food with the other women. She waits until
after burial to paint herself because the body would not decompose if
she did it before. After the bones have been prepared for dispersal
among the women she is one of the carriers and is usually the first to
get them.

The child sees the mother's sisters as arndi not only because they are 604
her sisters but because the father may die and the mother will be 587
transferred to a younger brother of the father, or an older brother
may die and his wives will be given to the child's father. In both
cases the women would be arndi as wives to the child's father.

602
553 shall be given, which means that the father chooses the names from his marelker.

602 Kutara and mari always come to each other's assistance in times of danger. When a camp quarrel is being aired kutara invariably stands at mari's side. If one of them is killed the other will aid the avenging party. A black magician's tales of his killings speak of a mari who had lost his kutara in a spear fight and had come to the magician [154] for aid to buy back his kutara's life. The sorcerer slew the kutara's killer by magic, and the mari paid for it with many handsome gifts.

[431] Presents are always being exchanged between kutara and mari. When ranga string is being given away after some of the big ceremonies, mari and kutara are always prominent in the exchanges.

775 When kutara dies mari's spirit always comes for him, along with marikmo's. If the deceased was a young man, the dead mari's spirit condemns his relatives for not giving the child better treatment and for not preventing his death. They always explain to his mari's spirit that they have done all they could to keep him alive. Mari helps marikmo's spirit take the dead soul back to its totemic water hole and helps protect it against the evil ghosts who try to steal kutara's soul. So, in death as in life, mari is kutara's protector and guide. In [852] the Djungguan circumcision ceremony mari's totemic name is always called out by his kutara, as is marikmo's, and it is believed that the spirit of mari appears at that time, although it is not seen.

602 Mari is usually the person who really teaches kutara his manners. [867] Mari is powerful not only because of his direct relationship with kutara, but also indirectly, for he is father of mokul (mother-in-law) and marelker (mokul's brother); he is marelker to kutara's bapa, and wawa or yukiyuko to mari mielk, who is mother to kutara's gawel.

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606 The fact that mari is father to kutara's mokul, the woman with the strongest taboos around her and one who is very important to kutara, gives kutara a strength he would not otherwise possess. He can force mokul to give her daughter to him if the mokul is unfair about it, since mari can put pressure not only on her but on her husband, who is gawel to kutara. Mari occupies, because of this relationship with kutara's gawel and mokul, one of the most powerful positions. A man's whole position, security and well-being demand that he have a number of wives and children; he must look to gawel and mokul for the fruition of his wishes; if his mari and he are on good terms, which nearly always holds true, his mari will force these two to help him. In other words, the relatives with whom ego is weakest are those with

CHAPTER IV

AGE GRADING

THE male's life cycle is divided on the basis of definite social group- 561 ings ordinarily spoken of as age grades. Although these social changes which take place in a man's life are at more or less definite physical age levels for all of the men, purely social factors have an equal importance in determining a man's status within the age grades.

Age grading is a generalizing process that cuts across the whole group, and is generically connected with the immediate families of procreation and orientation. Status in the age grades is closely correlated with a man's family position.

The peoples of the different areas apply various terms to each of the age grades. The ones used here are those which seem to be in more general use by all the Murngin. Children up until the age of six or eight are called dji-mer-ku-li regardless of sex; but as soon as he is circumcised a boy may be called by a term that denotes the ceremony which was used for his circumcision. The boy who is circumcised 561 by the Djungguan is called par-tung-o, the name of the ground where 852 the bushes are put in the outside camp and where his blood falls. Sometimes the names mo-lu-lu and mor-da are used for the Djungguan initiates.—This circumcision name is used from the time a boy is cut until he is dead, but is looked upon as an age-grading term to separate a male from the uncircumcised group below him. Sometimes an uncut boy is called da-pi gar-da-ko or yo-to gar-da-ko (foreskin) from his birth until he is painted for his initiation.

Wangurri married men who belong to the age grade above the 561 younger single men are called mir-ri ma-mi, "camp." The Djambar- 885 pingu people call an as yet childless married man wonga mirri, 591 "camp-man," which distinguishes him as a man who still has an attenuated relation with his family of orientation and has not yet established his family of procreation, who has been initiated into the various ceremonials that represent the attainment of a mature age-grade status, and who is in the main married people's camp and not

561 885 in the boys'.—During his entire life a man has age-segregating terms 591 applied to him.

A small girl is called mielk yoto (woman child, or small child). 561 A girl with breasts and without a child is referred to as wirkul mielk (breasts woman). From first pregnancy until death a woman is called gung-mun, literally, giver.

Very old men are more or less informally given an age-grade status and grouped under the term or-ung-o, and old women are called kar-kar-ang (white hair).

The tests of a man's ordinary status are (1) his responsibility in blood feuds and (2) the possession of children. The tests of a man's ritual status are (1) the areas of the sacred grounds into which he can penetrate and (2) the parts of the graded rituals in which he can participate. Although these two categories of status do not always coincide, they usually do, for it is felt that they should. Further, the effect of the ritual taboos of the different grades decidedly alters a man's ordinary participation in the community's daily round of events.

857 Small children, boys and girls, accompany their mothers to the lily swamps or oyster beds. They are carried astride their mothers' necks 857 and put their hands around the mother's forehead. (This method is used in the initiation rituals when the little boys are carried by the men, to indicate the age status of the neophytes.)

857 Little girls continue to accompany their mothers and help them at first as a part of their play. Gradually they learn their part in the 868 woman's division of labor. The division between men and women is 482 concretely expressed by the manner in which they carry their personal baskets. The women place the string handle of the basket over their foreheads and allow the basket to hang down their backs. The men place the string handle over their arms and wear the basket hanging from their shoulders.

857 In due time the small boys form little groups and play by themselves such games as throwing mud balls at one another, throwing slender sticks in the manner of their fathers, and they indulge in many kinds of improvised and not very formalized play.

Young boys, before and after circumcision, carry small fish spears with them, but do not use spear-throwers. They play along the water's edge with the spears, and occasionally strike a small fish, developing their throwing technique to considerable accuracy. At this period they but does not dance in the triangular ground (see the openings in the "ladder" generally classed as spatial expression); at the same time he 561 591 moves to the boys' and unmarried men's camp. When a man is married he starts living openly in the main camp with his wife and becomes a wonga mirri. At approximately this time he sees Yurlunggur. At a later period, sometimes after only a year or two and other times much later, he gives his blood to Yurlunggur. In the Narra ceremonies a man tends to be much older before he sees the higher totems, which, ordinarily speaking, means he has had children or he is biologically in middle age. Although the initiation symbols vary for the older and [304 less well-defined statuses, the fundamental division between men and women which usually identifies a man with the male group is in all 857] initiations symbolized by the rite of circumcision, whether it be an element in the Djungguan, Marndiella, or other ritual. The circumcised penis has the mark of the snake upon it because the python has taken the foreskin and by the operation the blood has been let for the Great Father—it is a social mark on an individual.[1]

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[1] An autobiographical account of a Murngin native is in preparation which will be a statement of age grading as it is seen and felt by the individual experiencing it.

796 302 [534] ments, the decorations ordinarily varying from one ceremony to another. Musical instruments are used—a drum, a wooden trumpet, singing sticks, or bull roarer.

A fundamental conceptual scheme runs through all the ceremonies; the various dramatic sections portray the myth by dance and song. For the western European, this whole totemic ceremonial behavior might be compared to a Wagnerian opera, with the myth as libretto; the motifs, like that of the snake swallowing the women, first expressed in a phrase or two, are later elaborated; and certain motifs, highly elaborate in some of the ceremonies, are only hinted at in others. For the reason that here we have ceremonies treated separately by the natives which they yet realize fit into a larger whole, the totality may, without too much stretching, be compared to the Nibelungen Ring. The fundamental difference is that the story is not a myth to them but a dogma and has the same ceremonial significance to the Murngin as the Mass to a believing Catholic.

852 Shortly after the rainy season is ended, the waters of the many lakes are receding, and the long dry period of plenty begins, the various clans of the Murngin and other northeastern Arnhem Land tribes perform their principal interclan circumcision, the Djungguan, which also serves as a *rite de passage* for the older boys.

A. The Preliminaries

1. Yurlunggur is made; its first blowing announces that a Djungguan has started.
2. The little boys are taken from their mothers. They are decorated and sent on a journey.
3. The camp is divided into its sacred and profane sections. The Warn-gai-tja is made and placed in the main camp.

1. When the leader of the Djungguan has conferred with his blood
brothers, the other old men of the clan, and usually the older men of
the surrounding friendly clans, upon the advisability of having a
Djungguan, the ceremony starts. A number of the older men go out
852 into the surrounding bush and pick out a small tree the core of which
534 has been eaten out by termites so that only a thin outer layer of the
trunk remains. This is cut down, cleaned out, and formed into a large
trumpet, which in a later section of the ceremony (E) is painted, and
becomes a totemic emblem representative of the great python deity,
Yurlunggur. It is then taken to the old men's ground and placed

either in a special house made for it or within a clearing inside the 852
jungle thicket. All this is done without ceremony. The trumpet is usu- 534
ally blown to ascertain if it has good tone and carrying quality, and also to indicate to all the tribe then present that preparations are under way for a Djungguan.

Normally two boys are initiated at one time. The fathers are ap- 852
proached for their permission to circumcise their sons.—Frequently the fathers petition the leader to initiate their sons, saying, "I'll give you presents of spears and my totemic emblem string if you will make this little son of mine a young man [yaoer-in]."

The boy may belong to a clan of either moiety. When the father decides that his son is old enough he informs him he must cease from being a child (dje-mer-ku-li) and become a yaoerin. The fathers, if asked by the leaders, always give their permission, unless they have decided to have their boys initiated in some other locality.

2. The little boys who are to be circumcised are told by their fathers and the other older men, "The Great Father Snake smells your foreskin. He is calling for it." The boys believe this to be literally true and become extremely frightened. Usually they take refuge with their mother, mother's mother, or some other favorite female relative, for they know that the men are organized to see that they are taken to the men's ground, where the great snake is bellowing.

The men take the boys from their mothers, the other women, and uninitiated children. All the female relatives grab up spears and spear-throwers and pretend to fight the men to prevent them from removing the boys. Some of the women, as do the men, participate in this ritual act in a spirit of play, others wail ceremonially, and some of the nearer female relatives shed real tears, both for the loss of the boy and the fact that he must go through the ordeal of circumcision.—All this is to make the boy think that the women are protecting him from the great snake, and, symbolically, to keep the great snake from swallowing him.

Some of the women talk to each other while they form a ring around 852
the boy to protect him from the men: "Our sons [brothers, et cetera] 777
have [or they are going to have] a great multitude of relatives, and their people are to be found everywhere. Our sons have many possessions. They have killed many kangaroos, wallabies, and birds, and they have speared many fish and turtles. Our sons and brothers have gone many places and speak many languages, and they have many presents from all their people." All this is exaggerated, but it is said for

852 its magical effect, to insure the boys' acquiring many presents on the
777 journey on which they are sent by the older men, and to enable them
always to have plenty of good things during their lives. The above quotation is not a formula and is varied according to the speaker.

852 The two boys, with a near relative such as an older dué (sister's hus-
band, father's sister's son), are sent out (at times this does not occur),
574 usually on separate paths, to visit the various relatives and clans to in-
484 vite them to the coming ceremony. The relatives of the boys who are present at the time they are sent away and who belong to outside clans are always desirous that the initiates visit their clans. The father chooses a trail for the boy to follow, but the man who accompanies and protects the boy usually modifies the father's directions to fit the circumstances of the journey.

The neophytes usually stay away a month, but their journey may last two moons, or less than one. If they leave when the moon is full they return when there is a new moon. In later years a man always boasts about the many clans he visited, the great distances he traveled, the long period he was absent on his journey.

The young men are sent away, it is said by the old Murngin men, so that they will meet new people, which is felt to be a good thing, and make lifelong friends among their more distant classificatory relatives. This ritualistic making of friends is not organized among these people as highly as in West Australia, nor does the path followed by the boy occupy as important a place in his later life as it does in West Australian regions.

One Wessel Island boy of the Perango clan went down through Elcho Island, where he visited the clan of that country, through Arnhem Bay and into the country of the Gwiyamil clan.[11] A candidate for initiation from the Wangurri clan went overland to the Barlamomo of Blue Mud Bay.

852 Before leaving, the boys are given new armlets which are then painted
with white clay; white cockatoo feather headdresses are put on them,
302 and their faces are daubed with white paint. Usually a white clay bark
301 band is tied around the forehead. Red ocher and kangaroo fat with
291 a white clay outline are put on the boys' faces. A large hair belt, suspended from which is a painted opossum fur string pubic covering, is put on the initiate for the first time. Before this he has gone completely nude, as do all uncircumcised boys.

852 Wherever the boy goes on his journey the people are informed of the
574 coming ceremony and invited to attend. All those who are invited give
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[11] See the clan and tribal map, page 40.

presents, such as spears, hair belts, spear-throwers, and other valued 852
articles, to the boy. Most of these things are later presented to the 574
father, older brothers, gawel, and mari. If the boy were not treated 431
liberally his clan would be offended, and it might lead to an open feud; but the people in the clans visited are always generous and such cause for a feud is never given. While the boy is away the women gather yams, lily bulbs, and other vegetable food to prepare for their guests. Many of the visitors come with the boy when he returns, while others precede him to participate in the preliminary ceremonies.

3. When the neophyte arrives in camp, or frequently before he comes 852
back, the Warn-gai-tja is erected in the center of the main camp where all the people live. Two poles about six feet long are cut from trees (of any variety) in the old men's ground and tied together. A bunch of leaves is tied to the top of each pole. If three boys are to be initiated, three poles are cut and tied together; if only one boy is to be circumcised, only one pole. Grass is strewn on the ground around the foot of the pole. The sticks are Dua and the leaves are Yiritja.

The general camp of both the men and women is called Wonga. In 852
the center of it, or sometimes at the side of this ground if better suited 361
for dancing, is the general dance ground. The warngaitja is located in the center of the dance floor. It is here that men and women dance. This is the only part of the ceremonial ground to which women and uncircumcised boys have access. It is sometimes called Wakinu Wonga, which can be translated as "the camp of those who do not belong," and is used in a contemptuous sense (see pages 110-113).

The men bring the warngaitja into the main camp from the men's 852
ground. They carry their spears pointing downward and beat time 533
against the shafts with their spear-throwers. They sing meanwhile:

"War-li-mar-la din-ya
War-li-mar-la din-ya
(Dua sticks of the warngaitja)
Warn-gai-tja ngu-lai-ngu-lai
Warn-gai-tja ngu-lai-ngu-lai"
(Yiritja leaves of the warngaitja)

The following songs are also sung:

(1) Stone spear
(2) Camp made by Wawilak Sisters in the Garl-ban-uk country (Gun-al-pia)

852 (3) Bamboo spear with stone head (Gun-na-mar-mar)
533 (4) Women and boys (Mielk koon-di Djer-ku-li)
(5) Fat of the kangaroo mixed with red ocher to paint the boy's face (Ri-djil-gur-o)
(6) The taboo name for the warngaitja (Ngur-mir-go-nor-mi-a)

During the singing and dancing the warngaitja is carried in the center of the group of men.

[535] The women meet them and, while the men stand in a compact circle, they dance around them waving branches. The pole is taken to various parts of the camp and the men form circles around it and sing the above cycle of songs while the women dance around them. Finally a permanent place in the center of the main camp is selected, and after singing once more over the warngaitja, it is placed upright on the ground and left there until the end of the Djungguan ceremony.

852 361 When a Djungguan is being celebrated a Murngin camp is divided into several geographical divisions. These territorial divisions are based on the age-grade groupings which are discussed in Chapter IV. The geographical divisions are (1) the general camp, (2) the men's ground, (3) the old men's camp and totem house, (4) the "totem well," or temporary dwelling place of the totemic emblem for one portion of the ceremony, and (5) the snake dance ground.

The territorial division clearly objectifies the grading in the men's association and the differentiation from women: the old men's camp, the holy of holies for the few; the dance ground for the circumcised, which includes the greater part of the young men; and the main camp for the uncircumcised and the women.

118 The men's ground is called Djungguan Wonga (camp). It is also called Ma-rai-in Wonga. Maraiin is a general word meaning, as nearly as it can be translated, powerful, sacred, taboo, or spiritual. It is used to describe anything that is taboo to the women and uninitiated boys. It is not necessarily taboo to everyone in the tribe. Totemic emblems, ceremonial grounds which certain age grades are forbidden, "sacred" names known only to the older men, and certain designs are among the things that are considered maraiin by the Murngin.

A quality possessed by a thing that is maraiin is dal. The literal translation of dal is "hard" and "strong," but dal means strength only in the magical sense of ritually "powerful." The maraiin wonga has a considerable amount of dal, but the old men's camp possesses a concentrated portion of this magical strength. The old men's part of the

Djungguan is called Wongar Dal. Wongar is the totemic spirit itself. 778 It is one of the beings which once lived in the earth and now lives in the subterranean waters. It is also the spirit or essence which enters the totemic emblem, so that when the old men's camp is called Wongar Wonga it means totemic spirit's camp. It is here that the totemic emblem is kept when it is not in use during the ceremony. Since the essence of the totemic spirit is supposed to be within the emblem, the camp literally is the place where Wongar lives. The young men who do not belong to the upper age group are told that he actually stays in this place.

The triangular dance ground, where the various dramatic dances 852 are presented before the initiates, represents a snake's body and is also supposed to have the Wawilak sisters and their children inside it. It is supposed to face toward the southeast.

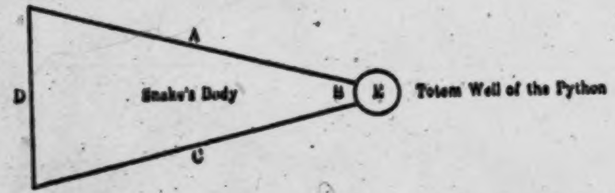

Figure 3.—The Triangular Dance Ground of the Snake's Body

The old men are saturated with all the ritual power that pertains 778 to the totem and its emblems, and the old men's camp therefore takes 561 on a taboo quality, partly because the old men take maraiin there. To a lesser degree, this is true of the camp where the circumcised men are allowed to go. They, to a lesser extent, have assimilated some of the ritual power which allows them to be on this part of the camp ground. Even the women have a minimum of maraiin: they know a [562] part of the ritual tradition; they dance around the warngaitja; they help in dramatizing the removal of the boy from the uncircumcised age group to the circumcised; they paint themselves with red ocher; and, of course, fundamentally they are Murngin social personalities.

The triangular dance ground is made by clearing off a smooth space 852 and heaping a line of earth about ten inches high around its periphery. The earth is then covered with green leaves from any variety of tree. The end (D) is twenty to twenty-five feet across, and from D to B is some forty to fifty feet. A and C represent the side of the snake. "The Wawilak sisters said that (A) was Yiritja moiety and that (C) was Dua

852 moiety." This division refers to the dance ground and not to Yurlunggur, who was Dua. B is the snake's anus; D is the head where the initiates stand, both in the circumcision part of the ceremony and also in that portion devoted to showing and explaining the totemic emblem to the older initiates.

The circle E is the special house for Yurlunggur erected on the first day of the ceremony and is a windbreak about four feet high and fifteen feet across. The dancers who paint themselves as iguanas in the totem scene ceremony hide there while the earlier part of the Djungguan is taking place.

[533 778] When the Yurlunggur dance ground is made, a cycle of songs is sung over the man who gives his blood to the ceremony (see page 274) by the old men. This makes the ground maraiin because it now possesses the essence of Yurlunggur.

773 852 *Native Interpretation.*—The warngaitja is symbolical of the two boys who are being circumcised. "The sticks are all the same as the boys being cut. The bushes on top are all the same as the hair of those boys." I was told each time I heard the Wawilak myth that when "the little sister sang inside the house, the older sister danced around the house just the same as women do now around the warngaitja pole in the Djungguan." When new groups arrive at the Djungguan ceremony, the ritual is being started, and they dance around the warngaitja singing "A-wa!—a-wa!" it is the sound of flood water flowing or of rain falling: "They do that because those two old women did that when [887 562] they tried to stop the rain." In the Djungguan ceremony older women ordinarily do the dancing and wailing. "No young women, only old women do this. Old women are better for the boys—it helps them more. Those old women when they dance are all the same as those Wongar women."

852 B. The Dancing Each Evening Around the Warngaitja. The Initiates Are Carried into the Men's Ground

1. The women wail over the neophytes while dancing around the warngaitja pole (or poles); the men rush in and remove the boys to their own grounds.
2. The circle of men around the fire and the sequence of songs and dances.

1. Until the last day of the ceremony dances in the Djungguan are not held during the day except occasionally in the early morning. But

when the sun sinks and dusk first appears the boys' maris (mothers' mothers), yeppas (sisters), and arndis (mothers) start wailing for him because they are going "to lose him forever." (Once the initiate is taken from the women, even before he makes his journey, he is not allowed to return to them but is kept entirely in the charge of some of the men.) 852

The women then dance with bent knees around the central pole, with their slow, shuffling rhythm, waving bunches of leaves in each hand. The men meanwhile pick the initiates up and gather in a group outside the general camp behind a clump of bushes. [535]

When the boys are first taken from the women, and each evening during the opening part of the ceremony, they are carried on the men's shoulders in the same position that babies are carried by their mothers and fathers.

The men beat their spears with their spear-throwers and sing: 852 533

"Djer-ma-kun-di,[12] mielk-kun-di."
(Uncircumcised boys, women)

The men rush out and surround the pole in a solid mass. The women sing a song which, freely translated, means, "We give you men this boy child while we dance." The men then sing kangaroo fat.—This performance is repeated a number of times.

After the above ceremony has taken place on the women's ground the boys are carried upon the shoulders of the men, who go, singing, to the men's ground. The women meanwhile continue to dance around the warngaitja.

2. A fire is built a short distance from the triangular dance ground (see Figure 3, page 265). The little boys are put down within the group of men who sit in a circle around the fire.

A new cycle of songs is sung:

(1) Turkey (Wal-pa-run-go di-ma-run-a, Dua)
(2) Fresh-water turtle (Gai-yil-pur-o djel-gai-a-na, Yiritja)
(3) Young boy before circumcision (Mil-er-um-bur-u)
(4) Fish spear (Bar-nai-djer-yer, Yiritja)
(5) A tree with a red flower that emus eat (Warn-bar-ko ngu-nu-lai)
(6) Bamboo spear (Djir-ne-djir-ne gur-o-o)

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[12] Cf. dje-mer-ku-li, Age Grading, page 125. "Djer-ma-kun-di" is from the ritual language.

852 At this period in the song cycle the following refrain is sung by all
533 the men:

"Ah—ah—ah—!! ah—ah!
Sis ye!! Sis ye!!
Ay—Ay—Ay—!!
Kak ye!!"

(7) Wallaby (Nar-ku mar-rain-djur-a kam-dal main-djur-a)
Two men stand up and dance in imitation of kangaroos. They may be either Yiritja or Dua moiety, but the Wallaby dance is for the Burilung subclass. [535]

(8) The rock kangaroo (par-de-par-de-min-ne burul-purul-min-e, Burilung subclass)

The following refrain is now sung:

"Bir—pir—!! Pir—pir—!!
Ah—oo!! Poo!!
Bir—pir—!! Pir—Pir—!!
Ah—oo!! Poo!!
Kak-ye—kak ye!!"

(9) Emu (Ur-tarn-gal-li-na), Yiritja
Emu head feathers (kurt-kurt-gal-li-na), Bur-lain subclass, Yiritja moiety

(10) A fresh-water fish (Gal-ngi mar-kunr-dur-na), Narit subclass, Yiritja moiety

(11) Ibis (Durn-di-tja gar-ran-gun-mi), Kaidjawk subclass, Yiritja moiety

(12) A small hawk (Kar-kar-ain-bir-na), Bang-ar-di subclass, Yiritja moiety

The refrain beginning "Bir—pir" is repeated.

(13) Carpet snake totem (Yur-lung-gur), Bal-lung, Ka-mer-dung and Wa-mut subclasses, Dua moiety

(The totemic emblem is brought in at this time. The chorus sings, "Djil-djil-la djil-djil-la [hiss of the snake].)

(14) Blood from the arm to paint the body in the Djungguan ceremony (Man-in-jul-or-un-gal), Yiritja or Dua moiety, since either can give his blood for the ceremony.

(15) A fresh-water, non-poisonous snake (Bog-min-bog-min) 852
(16) Fresh-water crayfish (Run-nar-ra-nar-ra-na), Yiritja moiety 533

The following dances take place:

(1) A small hawk (Kar-kar-kain-bur-na mal-le-wir-de-wir-de) 852
(2) Dollar bird (?) (Ko-ko-mir-ding), Dua moiety 535

Big gray kangaroo, wallaby, and rock kangaroo are also danced. This ends the ceremony for the evening, and the refrain "Wah! wah! wah!" (sound of running water) is sung.

Whenever wallaby is sung in the above cycle of songs two men stand up and dance at one side. Sometimes they are joined by several others. The men hold their hands in front of their chests with the fingers pointed downward to imitate the posture of the front legs and paws of the wallaby. They dance jumping sideways as one often sees the wallaby move when frightened. At intervals they fall flat on the ground, remain there a moment, then arise and start the dance over again.

While the chorus of men sing and the men at the side dance, one man stands by the side of the ring and calls out in a high shrill voice, "Kawk! Kawk!" This is supposed to be the call of the wedge-tailed eagle.

Native Interpretation.—"The warngaitja was put up the first time by the two Wawilak women. They cut off the stringy bark tree and put it up and tied it with bush string. Now men do this." "Those women said, 'We two sisters, we'll do this and make up this warngaitja dance and everybody will do this after us, but the ranga and maraiin will belong inside of the men's ground.'" (For further interpretation of the Warngaitja ceremony, see Section E, where the ceremony is performed for the last time.) 852 773

C. YURLUNGGUR COMES OUT

1. The older men sing Yurlunggur and his totem well and several bring out the trumpet. It is blown over the uncircumcised initiates. The older boys (those about to pass into a higher age group) hide their heads under the women's mats. 852

1. Just before the Yurlunggur song is sung (13 of the cycle in Section B), the leader of the ceremony calls out the totems of the Liaalaomir clan and of other clans which possess the same totems as this

852 group (see pages 39-51 for the list of totems possessed by the local clans), beginning with the great rock python Yurlunggur.

One man of this clan (or of another clan in the Dua moiety) leaves the circle and walks to the edge of the nearby bushes in the direction of the old men's camp and cries out the totemic name of the country where Yurlunggur swallowed the two Creator Sisters and their babies. This country belongs to the Liaalaomir clan and the names are those of its sacred water hole as well as those of the country (see page 46 for the names of the country).

Finally Yurlunggur's tongue is called. All the younger men, who have not been initiated into the higher parts of the men's association by seeing the totem of the rock python, lay their heads on the ground and the older men cover them with women's pandanus mats (ainmaras). The uncircumcised boys who are to be initiated in this ceremony have usually gone to sleep long before this time. They are awakened and their heads covered in the same way.

The older men continue sitting with their heads up in an attitude of expectation. Four or five men have left the group and have quietly slipped into the bush. The men are still singing the totemic names of the python. As if from some far-off subterranean stone chamber one hears a kind of bellowing roar. It is a weird sound. To those who have been reared on stories of mediaeval knights and their dragons the sound is like that which one imagines a wounded dragon would make. The roar continues for some moments, which the initiates say appears to be a long time.

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534 The Yurlunggur trumpet (totemic emblem) appears. It is carried by the three or four men who shortly before disappeared, while another blows it. When it is within a few feet of the circle its carriers stand still while the trumpeter continues blowing. Yurlunggur's "head" is pointed toward the circle of men and the neophytes. It is blown over them. It is then turned around, and with the man still blowing it, is carried back to the old men's camp, which is the totem house. The carriers and trumpeter sneak back to the circle and all the initiates are told to uncover their heads.

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852 *Native Interpretation.*—"These two sisters sang Yurlunggur and menstrual blood. They sang blood because that is what brought the snake when Yurlunggur came. This is the same when the men bring Yurlunggur in at night to the circle. The iguanas bring him in. Yurlunggur crawled right into the camp with the women and their

children. He swallowed them." (These statements are also applicable 773 to the sacred songs sung while the subsection names are called out— 852 see Section B.) During a Djungguan one of the older men said, pointing to the trumpet, "That is the real Great Father. He is also the real father for these boys who are going to be cut."

D. The Dances on the Triangular Dance Ground

1. The men dance a variety of animal dances, while the initiates 852 stand on the edge of the dance ground and are instructed by the 535 old men.

1. All the men then collect and go over to the dance ground. A fire is lighted in the center. The Yiritja men dance while the Dua men look on; then the Dua dance while the Yiritja watch. The same leader conducts the songs for the men of both moieties. Sometimes two moieties dance together instead of separately, but this is considered less proper.

After the alternation of the dances by the moieties, all the dancers join hands and, calling out in turn wedge-tailed eagle and kangaroo, they stamp out the fire. A new fire is started in the same place and all of the men go out at the anal end of the snake dance ground to the side. They divide into two groups, one representing the Yiritja gray kangaroo and the other the Dua wallaby. They squat on their haunches and hop into the dance ground at the anal end, and when they reach the fire they dance around it as one group. They fall down and lie in a heap around it. This ends the ceremony on the dance ground for the night. They return to the dance ground in the main camp calling out like hawks[18] after they have given the sound that symbolizes running water. Meanwhile in the old men's camp can be heard the low bellowing of the python trumpet "to let everyone know that the Great Father is in camp." It is late and the women have gone to bed; their fires are still burning when the men disband after the day's ceremony.

All the men participate in the above dances, except the boys to be

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[18] The hawk is a Yiritja bird supposed always to be on the lookout for small snakes [825 believed to be their chief antagonists.—Tremendous grass fires are made all over the country when the dry season has parched grass and brush to the point where they are 224] easily burned, to clear the land so that it is easy to hunt over. They are made particularly by the women to aid them in catching bandicoot and other small game. At this time hawks gather about, intent upon catching snakes, grasshoppers and other small game which run before the fires.

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circumcised and a few of the older men, who stand outside at the head of the dance ground. The old men tell the initiates the meaning of the dances. The little boys stand, each with the men's basket under his arm, with the string handle over the left shoulder, in the manner of grown men.

The entire Djungguan song cycle is repeated during all the time the boys are away to invite others to their circumcision and from two to four weeks after their return. The dances vary slightly, and occasionally a few new elements are introduced into the main camp ceremony.

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Sometimes an old woman, usually the initiate's mother's mother (mari), goes through the camp snatching the men's spears from them and threatening the younger women with the weapons. She is taking a threefold rôle in this ritual act: (1) expressing the antagonism of the women's division of the sex and age structure toward the men's division; (2) disciplining the younger women and thereby increasing the solidarity of the women's division; and (3) acting the part of a very old woman, which gives her special privileges, since old women are "more like a man" (see page 102 on the relationship of older mothers-in-law to their sons-in-law).

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On certain nights (there is no regular order), several fires are built outside the python dance ground in a line running from the python's anus, and several inside the triangle. After having left the warngaitja circle and starting their ceremony on the python ground, the men, instead of dancing wallaby and kangaroo, dance hawk and rock kangaroo. The fires are built, say the natives, to chase the rock kangaroos out of their hiding places, and when the hawks see the fires they appear as they do when the natives light bush fires to hunt kangaroos.

The hawks cry, "Kawk! Kawk! Kawk!" They carry under each armpit green bushes or paper bark which they shake in imitation of hawks flying, and they carry their spear-throwers to represent the birds' tails while they dance between the fires. They are plastered with white clay. A white band of clay covers the face from the eyebrows to the bridge of the nose and runs from ear to ear. Another band of clay extends laterally from jaw to jaw beneath the mouth and across the chin. The upper arms, trunk, and upper legs are daubed with parallel lines of birds' down made fast with human blood.

[302]

The rock kangaroos dance first, followed by the hawks. Both stamp out the fire on the dance ground with their feet. The hawks call out their totemic names and the rock kangaroos shout their taboo names. The kangaroos are Dua and the hawks Yiritja. Usually the men who dance the Dua animal belong to the Dua, and the men who dance the Yiritja bird, to the Yiritja moiety. 852 535

Early in the morning, before the heat of the day, ceremonies are also held. The uncircumcised initiates are again placed before the head of the dance ground with one or more old men to explain the meaning of the various dances and songs. The first set of dancers are Dua honeybees. They come in one at a time in a zigzag line from the bush and enter the dance ground at the tail of the snake. They kneel before the boys and lie down with the arms stretched above the head and the legs at full length. The last two dancers dance around the others. They all lie down on their backs in one or more lines. Each man places his head between the legs of the man above him and stretches his arms above him at an angle so that they cross the legs and form a diamond pattern, which is supposed to symbolize the honeybee and is one of the few dominant designs found in the totemic paintings of the Murngin.

They squirm forward and backward to represent bees in a hive, while they cried out, "Wah! Wah!! Wah!!" They leave the head of the dance ground and return to the bush. The faces of the little boys remain inexpressive, like masks, throughout the dance.

Yiritja kangaroos are then danced. The Dua wallabys are in a line directly back of the tail of the snake, and to the rear of them are the Yiritja kangaroos. The two lines of dancers pretend to fight with their forepaws as these marsupials box. The leader beats his singing sticks together and leads the ceremony while standing back of the dancers. He sings wallaby and kangaroo. [534]

Farther back in the bushes a man, painted with a "string harness" worn by present-day women but representing here that of the two old Creator Sisters, stands with a spear articulated to his spear-thrower. He sneaks up toward the animals as the two lines form again after their sham fight. The two lines merge. The "hunter" throws his spear and "kills" the leader. He limps off and, followed by the wallabys and kangaroos, falls down at the head of the snake.

Native Interpretation.—The triangular dance ground in the Djungguan has the same interpretation as both the excavated and the surface dance grounds of the Ulmark ceremony. A dance ground is a snake's 773 852

773 body and it is usually thought of as having the women and children
852 inside it. Frequently the green leaves surrounding it are said to be the women after he has spewed them up. During one of the many times I was told the story of the Wawilak women, when the narrator got to the moment in the drama when the sisters were seeking something more powerful to stop Yurlunggur and they sang menstrual blood, he interrupted himself and said, "When the dance place for the Djungguan is square and not triangular it is a camp of these women. When it is this way [triangular] it is a snake's body. At Mirrirmina you can see the holes where all the sons of Yurlunggur crawled around the two women and you can see the dance ground where the snake fell after swallowing them."

852 E. The Bloodletting

778 1. Yurlunggur is painted.
796 2. Yurlunggur is blown over the men who give their blood; the names of the ancestors are called.

304 1. All during this section of the ceremony the totemic trumpet is kept in the old men's camp or in the specially built ceremonial hut (the python's totem well). During the preliminary stages of this section Yurlunggur is painted.

852 2. On the day before the circumcision a bloodletting ceremony
796 takes place in the old men's camp. The blood is to be used as an
304 adhesive substance to hold the birds' down and native cotton to the
561 dancers' bodies. Before a man offers his blood for the first time Yurlunggur is blown all over his body; after the first time it is unusual. This ceremony is one of the ritual methods by which a man is admitted into the higher order of the men's association. Though it is not obligatory for him to go through this rite as it is for the young boy to go through the circumcision ceremony, all of the men feel it their privilege to contribute their blood either the first time they enter the old men's grounds or at some later period. Most men, while still in their prime, give their blood every time this ceremony is held.

852 Here is an account of one of the many blood sacrifice rituals wit-
796 nessed by the author:

304 The old men sing over the man, Lika. The "mouth" of Yurlunggur
533 is placed against him and the trumpeter blows all over his body while the trumpet's notes keep time with the slow rhythm of the singing sticks of the leader.

The cycle of songs is sung in the following sequence: 852

(1) Human blood (Man-in-gul-ur-un-gul) 796
(2) Python snake totem (Yurlunggur ar-lur-la) 304
(3) Snake's hiss (Djil-djil-la) 533

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After each song the men take turns calling out the name of some of their ancestors (usually father's father or mother's mother's brother). Sometimes only the names of the ancestors are called out, but at other times men shout: "My mother's mother's brother [mari] carries a totemic emblem on his back!!"—"My mother's mother's mother's brother makes a totemic emblem!"—"My mari has a large penis!!"—"My father's father [marikmo] has a net in his hand and is catching many fish." The old men are always described by the men who use their names as making a totemic emblem or performing some other act while a totemic emblem is being made. The names of the old men are always their totemic and taboo names. The relatives referred to may be actually living, dead, or mythological ancestors. Each man continues all the relatives' names he pleases to select and then calls out, "Bilin [I'm through]." The leader then turns to the next man and he continues the same process.

(4) The fourth song sung is earthquake shaking the ground (movement of Yurlunggur) 852 796
(5) Snake's tongue 304
(6) Dua lightning 533
(7) Black rain cloud (Goi-ro-ma-la)
(8) Rain clouds covering the sky (Warn-ba-nar-ri)

The members of each subclass are taken in order by the leader to call out the names of their ancestors as well as the names of their totemic emblems. The Ballung subclass sings first, then Kamerdung and Wamut follow. All the Yiritja subclasses follow and then the fourth Dua one. Sometimes all four of the Dua subsections are called first, then the four Yiritja. Giving the ceremony a sequence of songs that follow in order of subsections grouped according to moiety definitely integrates the subsections into the ceremonial structure. At the same time the dead and the mythological ancestors are also placed in their correct subsections and moiety.

While the singing is going on, the man's arms are tied near the wrist and shoulder with some stout cord. A stone spear head is broken and a flake of it used to make a half-inch cut in the lower arm. The

852 leader rubs the man's head with his hand while another cuts his arm.
196 The totemic emblem is blown against the wound.

384 The blood runs slowly, and the rhythm of the song is conducted with equal slowness. In a second or two the blood spurts and runs in a
533 rapid stream. The beat of the song sung by the old men increases to follow the rhythm of the blood. The blood runs into a paper-bark basin. "When Lika gets up he'll be very quick and feel very light; and he will be very happy because that blood running out of him will make him that way."

Two men hold the trumpet for a third to play. One of them keeps his hand on the blood-giver's head, occasionally rubbing it, and then massaging the forearm. He keeps one hand or part of his body against the trumpet.

The bottom of the basin fills with blood, and pieces of paper bark are taken from a supply near at hand, broken up in little pieces, and thrown into the basin. They soak up the blood and more pours in upon them. Once more small pieces of paper bark are placed in the basin to be saturated. These pieces of bark will be used later as brushes with which to put on the blood. The giver looks down at the blood coming from his arm with a smile which expresses pride, a slight embarrassment at being the center of attention, and real pleasure. Meanwhile the leader of the ceremony continues to massage his arm. The chorus now sings stringy bark tree.

The blood runs slower and the rhythm is decreased. One of the men loosens the cord on the upper arm and it is taken off. The song and the blowing of the trumpet continue. The slowly dripping blood is stopped with a bit of bush cotton or birds' down. The blood-giver massages his arm with an upward movement. He goes over to the side of the camp and lies down. Frequently the men who give their blood faint and remain in a state of coma for an hour or more because of exhaustion.

The next man opens a hole from yesterday's giving and the blood pours forth in a stream. It runs quickly, and the rhythm of the song is at a very fast tempo. There is much smiling among the men and an occasional "main-muk, main-muk (good, good)."

A third man pulls off an old scab from his arm and the blood pours forth in a larger stream than that of the others. The trumpet continues to blow (but not over the blood-giver since he is not one who is giving for the first time).

Several men proudly exhibit their arms which show five and six 852
cuts that have been made during previous ceremonies. 796

The man who gives his blood for the first time is considered to be 304
in a dangerous position. This is one of the reasons, the old men say,
why he is played over. 826 "That man who gives his blood for the first time for Yurlunggur might get killed. That is why we play over him. That blood comes straight from his heart to his arm when it runs out. That is why we tie it at the top or it might all run out. The boy might get killed because his soul is in his heart and the blood comes from there for corroborees." "It is blood [man-gu] which makes people strong all their lives; if a man's blood runs out and he is emptied of all his blood that man dies and his soul is gone. We got this body because we have that blood. If that blood goes away we are empty inside."

It is believed that this blood, when it is on a man's body as a part 826
of his decoration for the ceremony, if touched by a woman will make 778
her ill or produce sores on her body, because it has had a totemic name given it and the essence of the totemic spirit has gone inside this blood. The blood of a man who has been hurt in an ordinary accident will not hurt a woman. She can rub against him and be all right. "The blood that hurts a woman is the spirit of the Wongar that is inside that blood. It has a big [sacred] name that the leader sang when the men cut their arms. The spirit that is inside that blood is not just that wooden trumpet but another one more inside [more sacred] and the totemic spirit itself, Yurlunggur.—That blood that man gives in the Djungguan is Wongar Derpal. [Derpal means magically powerful and strong.] That blood the old man gives to the dance people makes them derpal and it makes their feathers and bush cotton derpal. The meaning is like this: suppose you and I have come a long way and we reach a good camp and our people have one house empty and it is a good place for us and they take us and put us in it. We get in that house and have a good sleep and no one can hurt us because we have friends. That blood is just like that. It makes us feel easy and comfortable and it makes us strong. It makes us good. That derpal is like the head man. We have that derpal from that blood. It is in our body. It goes inside when we put that blood on it. That blood makes a very big thing."

The night of the day following the bloodletting, the procedure in 852
the main camp is changed. The old women start the evening's per- 796

852 796 formance by wailing and dancing around the warngaitja. The men enter the camp, the boys on their backs now covered with bundles of bushes and leaves. The boys are placed on the ground under the pile of bushes by the warngaitja poles. The men stand with spears around them. The song ends. The men snatch the warngaitja from out of the ground, take the two boys, and run away into the men's ground. The women follow them singing flood water, stop at the edge of the men's grounds and return to the center of the camp, while the men continue on to the fire circle.

852 796 773 826 *Native Interpretation.*—The blood that runs from an incision and with which the dancers paint themselves and their emblems is something more than a man's blood—it is the menses of the old Wawilak women. I was told during a ceremony: "That blood we put all over those men is all the same as the blood that came from that old woman's vagina. It isn't the blood of those men any more because it has been sung over and made strong. The hole in the man's arm isn't that hole any more. It is all the same as the vagina of that old woman that had blood coming out of it. This is the blood that snake smelled when he was in the Mirrirmina well. This is true for Djungguan and Gunabibi."—"When a man has got blood on him [is ceremonially decorated with it], he is all the same as those two old women when they had blood. All the animals ran away and they couldn't cook them."

When the trumpet blows over the man giving his blood, it is Yurlunggur risen out of his well to swallow the women and their two children because he has smelled the menstrual blood of the older sister. Several well-informed men told me, "When Yurlunggur blows over them when they cut their arms it is like that snake comes up and smells that woman's blood when he is getting ready to swallow them." The songs sung refer to the profanement of the pool and the swallowing of the women by the snake, which means that the man who is giving his blood for the first time is being swallowed by the snake and is at the moment the old woman.

The first *giving* of blood was made by the Wawilak sisters themselves, since it was the blood from their heads and those of their children which was first used by man. "When the Wongar men [who came after the women had been swallowed] looked closely at the stone, they found blood from the heads of the two women and boys [where the snake had bitten them; see myth, subdivision 6]. 'What will we do?' 'Run and get some paper bark and make a panikin out of it.'" 852

"They tied up two panikins and put the blood in them and went to the ceremonial grounds. 796 773

"Take all the bird feathers and we will paint ourselves. You do this and I will go and cut Yurlunggur." 826

It is only the men's blood that is of the right quality for use in the Djungguan ceremony. Women's blood cannot be used. "Woman's and man's blood are just the same but woman's blood is no good. Wongar would not allow it to be used. He will only take men's blood." The blood is not only the menstrual blood of the women in the eyes of the old men; "That blood, that old woman's blood that ran out here [informant pointed to his pudenda], that blood is a live Wongar's blood too. He [the man who was giving the blood] does that for Wongar too. They blow that trumpet over him [the blood-giver] because the snake came out and smelled that woman's blood when she went after paper bark." These last statements were made within the totemic camp of the old men while they and I watched the young man who gave his blood for the first time.

When "Djili-djili-la" is sung after "blood" and "Yurlunggur," it, in singing form, "is just the same as when the snake comes out the first time," by which the various men who told me this meant "when Yurlunggur comes out" as described in Section C. In other words, these two parts of the ceremony are equivalent.—The next song, "Earthquake," was interpreted: "Those two women came to that place [Mirrirmina]. Yurlunggur smelled them and turned over and moved the ground." Whenever an earthquake occurs in Murngin country it is always said that Bapa Indi (Yurlunggur or Muit) is moving in the subterranean waters.—When the next song, "Snake's Tongue" was sung, a leader of one of the Djungguan said, "Those two women try to stop that snake's tongue. He wanted to swallow them. That is what this means. They gave his tongue an inside [sacred] name." Another man said, "When that trumpet blows he is singing out and asking, 'Which one has got strong blood?' It is like he is choosing the man he wants. When he gets that man he plays all over him just like he was licking him. He did those two Wongar women that way before he swallowed them. This makes the man's blood come out quick and easy."—After the next song, "Dua Lightning," the leader of one of the ceremonies said, "That is the forked tongue of the snake. Storms and thunder come from him. That is

852 796 773 533 823

852 when he is after those two Wongar women." When "Rain Cloud"
196 was sung the leader said to me, "Those two women are trying to
113 stop that rain because it is coming like a flood and trying to cover
533 them up, it is all the same as if they were being swallowed by a
snake."—"Those women are trying to sing to stop the rain but they are only making sounds" (that is, they are having no effect on the rain or snake)—also a comment when "Cloud in the Sky" was sung. —After the completion of this cycle, the leader said to me, "No man made these songs. Those two women made them to keep the two lines [Yiritja and Dua moieties] sacred—to keep marriage straight."

852 The singing of the real and mythological ancestors' names is much
196 more significant than merely recalling the names of the dead, for the
souls of the dead are believed to be within the totemic trumpet itself
115 (and within Mandelprindi and Yermerlindi in the Gunabibi ceremony
and Uvar in the Ulmark ceremony). "When we have Djungguan, Gunabibi and other corroborees we men tell the women when a man is dead [recently died] that he has come back because that Djungguan has been named his big name [totemic name]. All the men believe he has come back and that all the souls of the dead on that side [moiety reference] are in the ranga [totemic emblem]. If my older brother should die, next Narra or Djungguan we have, he would come back and go in that ranga. That is why we get angry when someone does a bad thing [unsanctioned sexual relation, open fighting, and the like] when we have a Narra or Djungguan. We must stop that corroboree and throw the ritual string away because our old marikmos and maris and kutaras [et cetera] get angry with us and make us sick.
[842] The little babies when they are fish [unborn] live in the same place
with marikmo and mari souls. That marikmo and mari watch us. If we are good, and we don't steal, or have other men's wives, he sends us fish to our wives." "You can't see that spirit when it comes back but you can see it in a dream. That man can be Yiritja or Dua. The man who has dreamed goes to the leader and says that so-and-so has come back, and that he says he has come to look at his children and to bring Yurlunggur. That leader asks the man which way the man in the dream said to make Yurlunggur for this next time, because he knows the man understands from this dream." This dream can come before or at the same time as the ceremony and the power name of the returning dead man can be given to the trumpet. Even though "spirits go to the islands of the dead,[14] or the whale takes them to the

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[14] See Myths, Barnumbir and the Island of the Dead, pages 524-528.

Warumeri well, they come back to the ranga and go inside of it and 852
into the well." 796

The souls of women likewise return: "When a woman dies she 775
becomes a Bir-im-bir [spirit] Wongar and goes to the same well as a man. She can come back to her ranga and is like those two old Wawilak sisters."

When the men come out and take the boy away from the women,
they are the snake or the flood and the women are the Wongar 852
women who made the first camp. On the last evening when the men 796
come out they stop at the edge of the camp and they sing rain. When 535
the boys are left under the piles of bushes they are the children of the 773
Wawilak women. "Those boys left there alone are all the same as those babies that were born to the Wongar women. They left their babies there the same way to dance: the women dancing around the Warngaitja mean that." When the men stand with their spears around the pole they sing rain, which means that the flood has come, and when they pull the warngaitja out of the ground and rush away and the others take the bushes off the boys and run away with them to the men's ground, the chorus sings flood. "That means that the flood came and took these two yam sticks and carried them away."—"A flood takes them away after the rain, that is why we sing Wa—wa—wa. That means that the flood water is running."

"When the boys lie there and the men pull the bushes off them that means that snake spitting them up. They are spirits now." (This refers to the first time the python swallows the two women.)

F. The Last Dances in the Men's Ground 852

1. The dancers are painted with human blood. 302
2. The boys who are to be circumcised are painted.
3. The initiates are shown the dances of the animals and the triangular ground and are instructed.
4. The older boys who have run away are caught and Yurlunggur comes out of the well and is shown to them.

1. The climax of the ceremony occurs next day. All the men paint with the blood that has been let the day before. The bloodletting occurs one day before the circumcision rite instead of the same day, because the exposure to the air gives the blood a more adhesive quality.

The blood is now sacred and powerful. It is, say the natives, as if it 852
were a totemic emblem in itself. It has the power of Yurlunggur in 302
it because he blew over the blood-giver. It is also powerful because the 778

852 leader walks among the men, who are decorating themselves with
302 birds' down to take the part of various birds and animals in the
778 coming ceremonial dances, and sings a song over their heads. He sings
the taboo names of the creature the man is painting himself to represent. This makes the design and the man magically powerful.

852 One end of a small green stick from any tree is chewed into a
brush and dipped into the blood, and the blood is painted over the
302 body of the man to form the various designs used by the dancers.
The paper bark dropped into the blood the day before is also used as a brush. Two men usually paint each other at the same time. The old men paint in the old men's camp, and the younger men go off by themselves. If the old men so desire, they may paint outside where the young men do. They do not let the neophytes see them decorate themselves for the ceremony.

2. The boys who are to be circumcised are painted on the dance
ground by older men. The totemic design of the clan is placed on
[824] each candidate's chest and abdomen, with the juice of an orchid bulb
as the adhesive; blood is never used because it is magically too power-
[431] ful for an uncircumcised boy. The man who paints the boy is always
given a present by the father and mother. The neophytes are then led by the older men to the head of the snake ground. Sweat from the armpit of an old man (almost as powerful as blood) is rubbed on the eyelids of the boys to strengthen their eyes for the coming ceremony.

852 3. The division of dances that follows on this day of the circum-
cision is on a moiety basis. Dua men dance Dua animals and plants,
535 Yiritja men dance Yiritja objects that belong to their world of culture,
616 man and nature.

Two men run in with their spears fixed to their spear-throwers and
852 point them straight at the boys as if they were going to throw them.
535 The men have their baskets in their mouths as they often do when
fighting. They return to the bush and rush in a second and third time. They are supposed to be fighting men and also catfish. The word for catfish is the same as that for one variety of fighters. The leader sings catfish while the men dance. Several old men stand beside the boys to instruct them and to prevent their running away.—Each group of dancers bows before the initiates just previous to leaving the dance ground.

After the "catfish" have retired, one man comes in dancing, carrying his spear-thrower and shaking it as if it were a bird's tail. He is a willy-wagtail. He pretends to pick flies off the branches of the trees

and acts generally in imitation of this bird. When he reaches the boys, 852
he bows at their feet. The leader walks along beside him beating his 535
singing sticks and singing the taboo names of this little bird. Two men dance a grotesque step which makes them appear deformed. They are mokoi trickster spirits.

Two "wallabys" now arrive, hopping along on their hands and feet and imitating other actions of the wallaby. Following them a large gray kangaroo (kai-tjim-bal) and a black-faced kangaroo appear. The last falls down and sleeps; he is considered a very sleepy creature by the natives.

A group of dogs come out crawling on their bellies. They howl like dingoes.

The dance of the mopoke owl and the bush rat is next. The rat crawls in on his hands and knees. The owl, squatting on his haunches, follows after, carrying leaves in each hand. He pounces upon the rat, but the leader kicks him over. This is repeated a number of times, and causes much laughter among the onlookers.

Brush turkeys next appear, and fires are lit all along the dance ground and back in the bush as when the natives try to smoke out these birds in hunting them.

The Dua honeybee dance follows. Two parallel lines of men about six feet apart start at the direction of the leader about one hundred and fifty yards back in the bush. They dance in a rapid rhythm, the members of each line crossing over and taking the place of the other group. When they reach the dance ground they all lie flat on their backs in a long line with the head of one dancer lying between the legs of the one ahead of him.

The stone kangaroos dance again, as well as the big gray kangaroo 852
and the wallabys. This finishes for the moment the initiation of the 561
young boys. They are led away toward the women's camp and left in a convenient clump of bushes between the men's camp and the women's while the initiation of another age group into a higher grade in the men's association takes place. The young men, who are to see [262
the totemic emblem for the first time, run away from the dance 184]
ground because they are to be put on a vegetable diet (see Section H, 3) and suffer the taboo of silence for a period of time. The older men run after them and bring them back.

4. Meanwhile, at the tail of the snake dance ground, Yurlunggur is 852
in the "python well" of the Liaalaomir people. He can be heard roaring in a very slow rhythm. The young men stand with their heads

852 [302] down. The bushes are pulled back from the "Mirrirmina well." All the men painted like iguanas lie in it on their backs with a symbol of the iguana painted on their abdomens. Yurlunggur, the trumpet, lies among them with one man blowing it. The trumpet is played over an iguana while he crawls on his belly out of the well and on to the dance ground. The trumpet then goes back for another and continues until all the iguanas are out of the well and in a line at the apex of the triangular dance ground. A trumpeter then repeats the last activity and brings the iguanas one by one before the line of initiates. The trumpeters then place the trumpet at the feet of the initiates and before the iguanas who are now kneeling in a line.

Each initiate is asked to try to blow the trumpet. Then the old men command all of them to "respect their fathers and mothers," "never to tell lies," "not to run after women who do not belong to them," "not to divulge any of the secrets of the men to the women, men who belong to a lower division of the association, or uninitiated boys," and all in all to live up to the tribal code.

852 535 113 *Native Interpretation.*—Kaitjimbal (large gray kangaroo) is repeated a number of times because, said the leaders, "We have to get in all the clan countries where he has totems." This is partly a rationalization: it is true he has rangas in a great number of places; but most of the other animals which are danced are also found in a large number of clan holes, yet they are not repeated so frequently. The use of the Yiritja kangaroo in the dance sequence shows that Yiritja as well as Dua things are ritualized in the Djungguan, despite the fact that the two old women were supposed to walk only in Dua clan territory. Kaitjimbal's ranga is his tail (see Ulmark ceremony, page 317). The mokois danced are said to be Yiritja trickster souls by some of the informants, Dua souls by others, and by another group they are declared to be of both moieties. The last category is probably correct, since the mokoi's moiety depends largely upon what clan country is being sung at that time.

852 113 Yurlunggur, the trumpet, is in the "totem well at the head of the dance ground." The iguana with him are his children. "They are initiated men who have given their blood for the Djungguan ceremony," or, as it has been concretely put by the natives, "Yurlunggur is in the Mirrirmina well. We hear him roaring out and the young men stand with their heads down." "Yurlunggur is the father of these iguana. He calls to them and brings them out one at a time, and

he is calling to his yolno [black human] children for them to see 852
him." 773

This section is equivalent to Yurlunggur coming out at the camp circle, Section C.

G. The Circumcision

1. The men tip their spears with human blood, pick up the two 852 uncircumcised boys and march toward the women's camp.
2. The women paint themselves.
3. The dance of the wild geese.
4. The women apply magic to the boys.
5. The circumcision and treatment of the foreskin.
6. The removal of the feather.
7. The food taboos are imposed.

1. On this last day of the Djungguan the men, at the ceremonial ground, paint their stone spear heads with the ceremonial blood. The leader of one of the ceremonies explained this in the following way: "We take that blood on our spears to the women's camp and tell the women we have killed a very big python and we ran away after we had killed it, but that the snake did not really die. The camp women know then it's Wongar. They think that blood on the spear is Wongar's. If a woman asks, 'Why did you kill that snake?' we say, 'So he'll go down in the ground. We want to be sure he'll go down in the ground.'"

The men then form into a regular line (both those who have seen Yurlunggur for the first time and the older men) and, beating on their spears with their spear-throwers, march toward the women's camp, crying out, "Ka—ok!! ye! ye! Ka—ok!! ye! ye!" On the way they pick up the two uncircumcised boys and place them on the shoulders of two men, again in the way small babies are carried.

2. Meanwhile the women, instructed by the old men to paint them- 852
selves and get ready for the camp part of the ceremony, cover their 302
faces with red ocher and their bodies with daubs of white paint. The painting is poorly done and not elaborate. It is only on this last day of the ceremony that the women are allowed to paint themselves, and it is explained that they are allowed to paint at this time only because it is the day of the circumcision and the men want them to
look nice when uncircumcised boys see them. For some little time 852
before the men arrive with the boys who are to be circumcised upon 535

852 [335] their shoulders, the women carrying bunches of leaves in each hand have been dancing around the grass where the boys are to be cut.

3. When the men appear in camp with the boys there is a short period of considerable excitement and seeming confusion. The men continue crying out and march to the camp dance ground where the grass and leaves are and where the warngaitja was placed. By this time the grass has become dry, and if it has been disturbed more grass has been added. It has been placed there so that no blood from the circumcision operation can fall on the ground, for it is believed that the child operated on would become ill if this happened. After the circumcision the blood-stained grass is buried or burned. Before the circumcision and while preparing the boys, the crowd divides into two halves which call out like wild geese (this is also a part of the Narra totemic ceremony), while the leader cries out the common names of the totemic emblems:

"Gun-bor! gun-bor! (no meaning)
Main-yir-pa (goose)
Gun-bor gun-bor
Dur-a-mul (fresh water from the clan well)
Gur-um-gur-um-bo (goose)
Birn-gi (holes left in the mud where the geese
had been feeding in a swamp country)"

852 304 4. The men form a compact group with the little boys in the center. The women stand slightly at the side. Most of the latter are crying. They say they are sorry because those little boys are going to be hurt. When the cutting is actually taking place they say, "You boys are fish, you are kangaroo, you are turtle [or any other game animal], and all of you things go into this little boy's blood, and all of the blood must go down to his penis, so that it will be like cutting a turtle head or cutting a kangaroo's head off, and it won't hurt the boys." This is cried out loud, and the old men say that it helps [785] the little boys to bear the pain. Sometimes the women carry bushes and whip themselves with them to bring all the pain from the boy to themselves. It is only the close relatives and members of the boys' own clans who cry for them or attempt to hurt themselves for the boys' sake.

5. Two men lie down on their backs. Each boy is given a shell of water and the contents are drunk so that his mouth will be wet when he is bidden to hold his basket between his teeth. It is the last drink

that he will be allowed to have for twenty-four hours. The basket 852
is placed in the boy's mouth to prevent him from crying and to help 304
him bear the pain.

The initiates do cry in spite of the basket. When they do, the men call out with a high trill which is supposed to be a snake's voice. The little boys beg to be turned loose. They are laid on top of the supine men and then held firmly so that they cannot move. The men's chorus surrounds the scene of the operation and it is impossible for the women to view this part of the ceremony. Some of the women dance around the men. One man cuts one boy, while at the same time a second individual circumcises the other. A neat operation is performed, and it is seldom that an infection sets in.

After each boy is cut, a man picks him up and runs with him back to the men's ground. After the man has washed his hands thoroughly with water, he warms them over a lighted fire stick. The wound is also washed and warmed by the man's hand.

The foreskin is put in a paper-bark basket filled with water. Later it is taken out and wrapped with paper bark and a pandanus string. It is hung on a basket as one of its pendants. It is supposed to be kept by the father until the boy grows up, when it is given to him. It is improbable that the boy ever receives the basket, but ideally this is the proper method of finally disposing of the foreskin.

6. Just after the circumcision is completed the leader approaches 852
each man who has participated in the Djungguan ceremony and pulls a feather off the latter's body as a sign that the ceremony is over. This also has a magical significance: it is supposed to prevent any illness or other bad luck from coming to each participant because of his part in the "powerful" Djungguan ceremony. (The same idea exists in the leaders' rubbing the back of the dancer in the Gunabibi ceremony.)

7. Until this period in the boy's life and during the ceremony until 262
the actual circumcision, the boy is allowed to eat any food that he 561
may obtain, but after this he is not allowed to eat any large game
until the rainy season has "made the grass come again." He is not 852
allowed to drink water until the following day; he is told a great flood has covered the earth and made the water salty, the sea has covered the land and there is no fresh water to drink.

Native Interpretation.—When a child is circumcised the snake and 852
the flood are supposed to have come again. Here is a typical statement

852 from one of the older men: "When I was circumcised they told me all the water was monok (salty or bad) because the flood had come and covered everything. I was told I could speak to no one except gawel and bapa and only little boys, and not to women or men."

H. The Two Circumcised Youths Are Steamed

1. A fire is built in the men's ground; the boys are steamed over it while being instructed.
2. They learn the totemic language.
3. Food taboos are placed on the older boys.
4. Yurlunggur returns to the sacred pool.

1. Next day, or shortly after, the initiates are taken to the men's ground. On the part of the ceremonial ground that is nearest the women's camp two parallel logs about a foot and a half apart are laid over two other logs placed directly over a stone fire. The stones are made red hot. Lily leaves are gathered and soaked in water, or sometimes bunch grass is dampened and used for this purpose. The boy stands on the upper logs and squats over the fire.

The dampened leaves are thrown into the fire and produce a thick steam. This pours around the boy and is supposed to enter his anus, go all through his body, and come out his mouth.

This is to make him a very "strong" man. It is to prevent him from being greedy or noticing the pangs of hunger or thirst. It is to help insure his having plenty of kangaroo, fish, and other animal and vegetable food.

852 867 The old men warm their hands over the fire and put them to the boy's mouth while they are addressing him: "You must not use obscene language. You must never tell a lie. You must not commit adultery, nor go after women who do not belong to you. You must always obey your father and respect your elders. You must never betray the secrets that you have learned from us to the women or the boys who have not been circumcised."

852 While they are speaking they also rub the navel of the child, for this is also supposed to make him "strong" and prevent him from being greedy.

852 869 2. The leader starts the round of totemic songs he used earlier in the Djungguan ceremony and conducts the singing with his singing sticks. The boys are taken off the fire and placed on the ground. A man brings a piece of paper bark on which several small pieces of food have been placed. Every variety of food obtainable in the camp at

that time is represented on the bark tray. The boy is given a piece of 852
kangaroo meat or some other food and an old man says, "That is not 869
kangaroo. You tell me the name of that which you're eating. What
is it?"

An old man sits beside the youth and whispers a totemic name of the animal into the ear of the boy. The boy then calls out this esoteric name as he swallows the food. As he says the totemic name all the men cry out, "Yai!!! yai!!!" The whole list of foods is gone through, the boy eating them and being told the taboo name of each. Even though the food is not represented on the bark tray, its name is told him and another pellet takes the place of the missing edible.
During the ritual the little boys are informed that if they impart any 852
of the information they have been given, "something will happen to
their mothers," and that the old men will spear them if they inform 869
any of the women or children. They are told that the old men will 626
know by magic if they betray their secrets. All the men insist that a
boy would be killed if he gave away the secrets of the men.—When
the ritual is finished, the fire and logs are covered with sand and earth,
and men and boys return to the main camp.

The newly circumcised boys are kept away from all women and 852
remain with the men until the wound is healed and they can walk
and urinate without pain or effort. Then the pubic coverings they [291]
have been wearing, the ones in which the women saw them before
circumcision, are taken off; a short song is played over them and they
are burned, others being placed on the boys to symbolize the change
in biological and social status. The boys are watched over most carefully
by the men during the entire ceremony, as well as during a
period after the circumcision. Some older man is always with them.
This attention is given both to keep them away from the women and
because it is felt that during a circumcision initiation a boy should
have every luxury given him and the best of everything that the
group has to offer.

Older boys show greater emotion and expression of pain than the younger ones when they are operated upon. The younger ones stop crying almost immediately after the operation.

3. The older age grade of youths who have been shown the totemic 852
emblem of the python for the first time (see Section F, 4) are put on 561
a vegetable diet for a period determined by the leader of the ceremony, 262
ordinarily about a week. At the end of the period the young men are
taken to the men's ceremonial grounds where they are painted by 302

852 some of the older men with the totemic design of their clan, the
262 leader and the older men meanwhile singing the totemic names of
561 the clans, animals, and sacred clan wells over the youths. They can
302 now eat anything they desire. The taboo of silence (see Section F, 3)
is also removed at this time. The leader of this ceremony, who, as
852 has been said before, is usually the head of the Liaalaomir clan, is
431 always given presents by the newly initiated boys. These presents consist of all varieties of food, weapons and other elements of the material culture. The whole family of the boy, both men and women, help him. Only the old men can participate in the consumption of food that is given in payment.

852 4. The ceremonial trumpet (Yurlunggur) is put back in the totemic well of the clan whose leader has been giving the ceremony. It is buried at night in the mud so that the women will not see it when they are at the well. If it is in good condition at the time the next ceremony is held, it will be used for this occasion; if not, it is reburied and a new trumpet made.

852 *Native Interpretation.*—The reference in the native interpretation in
Section E which says a man cannot eat anything when he has blood
262 on him because he is unclean, indirectly explains the superficial reasons for placing the taboo on the older boys.

A general summary of the interpretation of each ritual section will be given in Chapter XI.

THE GUNABIBI CEREMONY

852 A. Preliminaries

1. Mandelprindi, the bull roarer, is made.
2. The young men are chosen for initiation by the leader.

1. The season chosen for the Gunabibi is always the dry period as soon as the food is plentiful, after the luxuriant spear grass has been burned and travel becomes easier. This ceremony lasts from two months to two years. At the discretion of the leaders it may be shortened or indefinitely prolonged. The information that a large group of people is coming from a long distance to participate at the Gunabibi often causes the leader to continue the preliminary stages a month or more while waiting for the visitors.

852 When the ceremonial leaders of the Liaalaomir clan have decided
that it is time to start the Gunabibi ritual, it is usually the younger
534 brother of the Liaalaomir leader who goes out into the men's ground

and makes a bull roarer (mandelprindi). The bull roarer is attached 852 to a human hair cord on a small stick before it is ready for whirling. 534 It is covered with human blood or red ocher and a snake design is painted on it. The Gunabibi song sequence is usually sung over it[18] to make it "strong," and often the painting is outlined with birds' down. The feathers are removed when it is whirled because they prevent the friction of wood and air which makes the characteristic booming sound. The mandelprindi is then wrapped in bark and hidden in a hollow tree or elsewhere within the men's ceremonial grounds.

2. The old men of the Liaalaomir clan and the leaders of the 852 nearby local groups confer and decide which boys are to be initiated 614 into the Gunabibi mysteries. Since all young men are in time inducted into the Gunabibi ritual, the only question to be decided is whether the boy is old enough. The leaders of the other clans must give their consent if they are present at the conference for the boy's initiation.

Native Interpretation.—There is little to comment upon in this first 852 section of the Gunabibi except that all the natives say that the bull 534 roarer is the snake itself and the initiates "are just the same as those in the Djungguan."

B. The First Ceremony in the Woman's Camp

1. The different clan garma songs are sung and the groups form 852 into one.
2. Mandelprindi is whirled and the camp women and men answer its sound.
3. The initiates are taken by the two Yiritja snakes to the totemic grounds.

1. That evening, or a few evenings later, according to the whim of the leaders, the actual Gunabibi ceremony starts. The leader sends word throughout the camp where a large number of people from the nearby friendly clans are collected, and all the men, women and children gather in the main part of the camp. Each clan group sings [614 the garma song (general camp's less sacred totemic song), that is recognized by all as belonging to that particular clan. The Djirin clan 533] sings and dances Djirin garma songs, and the Warumeri sing and dance their garma songs.

When this is completed the members of the various clans (men, 852 women and children) at the order of the leader all form one large 533

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[18] See pages 294-295.

852 533 group and sing the rapid Gunabibi rhythm that is used for the general "outside" camp.

2. Out in the nearby bush a Dua man whirls the mandelprindi. [534] The sound is much like that of a bass viol: "Ah um um um um, ah um um um um."

The man whirling the bull roarer cannot be seen. The women and uninitiated are told that Muit, the great father, is calling out for the initiates (in the Djungguan they are told he is calling for the foreskin).

The bull roarer is whirled around the man's head from left to right as he slowly turns with it. He then stops and whirls it from right to left. This is continued for as long a period as the man has strength and feels inclined.

At each pause in the sound of the bull roarer caused by the change in the direction of the whirling, the leader of the camp calls out in a high, shrill, falsetto voice:

"Ah! Yai! ah! Yai! ah! Yai!"

This is in a very quick tempo. The moment he stops, the women answer in high soprano voices:

"Le le le le le le le."

This creates a pattern of musical sound: mandelprindi (bass viol tone and rhythm), male leader's voice, and female chorus.

Sometimes the leader and the bull roarer cry out at the same time. Sometimes two Yiritja water snakes answer instead of the leader. This continues for a quarter of an hour, and sometimes much longer. By this time the women may be in their camps, still chorusing, and the group of men sitting down while smoking and talking.

852 3. The two Yiritja moiety men who are looked upon as Yiritja water snakes and who have been designated as messengers leave the main camp and go out into the men's ceremonial grounds, where they are supposed to stay until the end of the ceremony, except when they appear [292] for ceremonial purposes at the main camp. Both wear white forehead bands, as do most of the men in the Gunabibi. With them go the boys who are to be initiated. The Yiritja messengers act as guards for the initiates, and also serve as instructors. The boys are not supposed to return to the main camp where the women are until the Gunabibi ceremony is over. They often do come back to the camp if the ceremony lasts longer than a few months, or if there is fear of night attack; but theoretically they must remain away from the women's

camp until the ceremony is completed. The old men insist that this is the only proper way to perform the ceremony. 852

Native Interpretation.—Throughout the Gunabibi ceremony, the sound of the bull roarer is the voice of the snake coming from the men's ground to the women's. "When Mandelprindi sings out, it is the voice of the snake, and when the women call back, that is the old women calling out to the snake who swallowed them in their house." Throughout the Gunabibi the answer of the camp women is always the cry of the two Wawilak women trying to stop the snake.

When the two Yiritja snake dancers reply to the bull roarer, they are the two children of the old women answering the snake. "Dua man always makes the bull roarer sing out and the two Yiritja snakes always answer." The bull roarer is Wirtit (Yurlunggur or Muit). Some of the men said the two Yiritja were "yellow-bellied water snakes."

C. THE MORNING AND EVENING DANCE SEQUENCE

1. The animals dance on the ceremonial ground. The men sing and the women reply. The sea gull dance.
2. Mandelprindi speaks and the women reply.
3. The song and dance sequence which is the core of the Gunabibi.
4. The opossum dance.

1. The next morning, before the morning meal has been eaten, the men leave the main camp and go to the men's ceremonial grounds. Here they stand in a line before a clear space about fifty or seventy-five yards in diameter and surrounded by heavy underbrush. They hold their spears, heads up, on the ground before them and beat time on the spear shafts with their spear-throwers. The leader often uses two boomerangs instead. They sing in a fast rhythm.

The leader stands before them as a director of the chorus. At the end of the song, which is repeated over and over, he calls out in a high, shrill voice:

"Ah! Yai! Ah! Yai! Ah! Yai!"

The women in the camp answer with the high shrill sound they make when they hear the bull roarer. After some five or ten minutes of singing a dancer appears from the bush and dances toward the leader and chorus. Neither the leaders nor the members of the chorus are decorated, but the dancer is heavily ornamented and represents a male sea gull. 852 535

535 852 292 302 On his head is a high painted headdress ("dunce cap") made of ti tree bark, topped with a bunch of native companion's feathers. The bark is covered with red ocher. The body of the dancer is completely coated with human blood, and the body from the waist up, as well as the arms and the shoulders, is covered with perpendicular parallel lines of birds' down, and bunches of leaves are attached to the upper arm. The face may have two horizontal lines running from ear to ear above and below the eye, with one additional line that crosses the face at the chin.

852 535 The dancer advances with slow deliberate rhythm in a zigzag course as though he had heavy weights attached to his feet. As he changes his course and his flight across the field, he squats and shakes his shoulders, which makes the leaves on his arms quiver like the feathers of a bird. He kneels and faces the chorus. The leader and men surround him, knock off his headgear and rub his back to rub off some of the birds' down that has been glued on it, and the leader sings, "Gunabibi! Gunabibi!" in a voice which is impressively dramatic and sounds much like a modern priest chanting a prayer. ("Gunabibi" is one of the names used for Muit and Yurlunggur.)

852 2. The dancing stops. A man comes out with a bull roarer and whirls it. In camp the women answer in a trilling high soprano.

533 3. The bull roarer is put away, and the chorus and leader sit down in a circle and sing mandelprindi. A few men stand up and move back and forth behind the others. They have their stone spears attached to their spear-throwers. They are supposed to be fighting men. The leader stands in front of all. The following song sequence, the heart of the Gunabibi ceremony and often repeated, is gone through for the first time.

Sea gull	male, female, and eggs
A small snake (bolokmi)	male, female, and eggs
Native companion	male, female, and eggs
Small rock python (wirtit)	male, female, and eggs
Muit (python totemic spirit)	male, female, and eggs
Small fresh-water snake	male, female, and eggs
Sea gulls	male, female, and eggs
A small snake (bolokmi)	male, female, and eggs
Sea eagle (dimala)	male, female, and eggs
Rock python (Wirtit)	male, female, and eggs

Muit (python totemic spirit)	male, female, and eggs	852
Four Muits[16]	male, female, and eggs	533

The song sequence may be changed and some of the animals or birds left out, but the cycle is more or less constant in order and number. When all the songs of the sequence are finished, the men go back to the main camp and eat the morning meal. The usual round of daily activities is continued until evening. Just at dusk the men again leave for the ceremonial grounds and go through the same ceremony as in the morning. Sea gull, and possibly other animals, have been danced the day before. The animal dance may be still bolokmi (small snake), or dimala (sea eagle) may now be in progress.

Each day one or two animals, sometimes more, are danced and sung in the same manner as the sea gull on the first day. The animals are taken in the order of their appearance in the song sequence, that is, following sea gull and bolokmi would come native companion, and so on, through large palm tree and Muit.

The males of the species are all danced first; when the complete list of this sex has been danced, all the females are taken in turn; and finally, both males and females. When birds are danced, as well as any egg-laying animal, the eggs appear in the last round of the song and dance cycle. After this has been completed, four pythons, two males and two females, are danced. They are coiled up, and supposed to be copulating. Following them, four native companions appear and go through the same performance, and finally four Muits are danced.

When the males or females dance by themselves, here and in later sections of the ceremony, they represent unmated animals.

The men return to the main camp and have their evening meal. It is eaten just after dark. An hour or so later they return to the ceremonial place and the Gunabibi ceremony is continued. 852

They all sit down in a circle around the fire and sing:

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(1) Dua country
(2) Mandelprindi
(3) Human blood for the Gunabibi ceremony

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[16] The division of each of the things danced, on the basis of male, female, and eggs, clearly demonstrates the Murngin way of thinking about sex and fertility, and also organizes these species in their minds on the basis of family pattern. A number of dances—such as Muit's, for example—are repeated, either because of the great importance attached to the totem itself, or because of the satisfaction the dance gives the native.—Usually certain plants, e.g., palm trees, are also danced.

852 (4) A small Dua bird
533 (5) Male opossum
(6) Female opossum
(7) Fire
(8) Male and female opossums

852 535 4. Dancers then come out grunting in imitation of the opossums. They have bark penises sticking erect from their belts. Some men without these appendages are female opossums. They may or may not simulate copulation.

After dancing for some few moments, the opossums bow before the chorus on their hands and knees, and the leader sings, "Gunabibi, Gunabibi!" The leader rubs each dancer's back with his hand.

The bark penises are removed and the dance is over. The python ritual is sung again. The opossums, a small kangaroo (Yiritja moiety), fire, and mandelprindi are also sung. This completes the day's ceremony. The two ritual periods—morning and evening—occur every day throughout the ceremony.

When the new moon (narlindi yurta) appears, this section of the ceremony is completed, and the next morning the men dance the last element of the sequence.

852 533 535 173 *Native Interpretation.*—The animals sung or danced are supposed to be those seen by the Wawilak women on their way north from the interior. They all belong to various clans and totem wells found specifically on the women's route and generally throughout the western and southern part of the Murngin tribe. (The totems in the east tend to center around the Djunkgao myth rather than the Wawilak.) —"Those two sisters named all those animals. As they went they said, 'By and by you will be maraiin.'" Some of the animals and plants danced, though they have totemic significance, do not have totemic emblems; but in a sense the dance itself serves to make them for the moment a totem, and the dance becomes a totemic expression, since the bodies of the dancers and maraiin express the totemic essence in the same way a totemic emblem does.

The bull roarer here, as before, is the voice of the snake, and when the women of the camp trill their answer they are the two old Wawilak sisters calling out to Yurlunggur.

852 535 173 When the various groups dance together, it is literally what it appears to be, making one people out of them. "The making of one

mob in a dance is all the same as making one people out of all those people from [by use of] the Gunabibi." 852

The tall headdresses of the dancers are supposed to be the snake's neck or the neck of the animal that is being danced. They are also the house of the two women. The feather headdress on top of the dunce-cap arrangement is the snake's head looking over the house. And when the whole headdress is knocked off at the end of the dance, it means the house has been destroyed by the rain and swallowed by the snake. When the backs of the dancers are rubbed by the leader, it means the snake is licking them, preparatory to swallowing them.[17] The cycle of songs sung and the dance, first of the male of the species, then of the female, and finally their offspring, are symbolical of reproduction. Said one of the leaders, "Black men walk about single, and by and by catch a mate who belongs to them, and by and by children come. Macassar man walks about by himself, by and by catch his woman, and more children come out. Big kangaroo walks about single and by and by he catches a woman and by and by there are children. It is all the same for opossum, fly, and bandicoot. Snake catches a mate and by and by there are children, and it is all the same for lizard, honeybee, pigeon, and bird, and turtle and everything. Black man cuts down tree and by and by little ones come up. It is all the same. Walk about single, by and by mate, and by and by children. It is all the fault of those women. If they hadn't done wrong in their own country this would not have happened. If they had not menstruated in Mirrirmina this would not have happened. Everyone, all plants and animals, would have stayed single. But after they had done these bad things, they made this new law for everyone." 535 773

Opossum is looked upon by the Murngin as a libidinous fellow.

D. THE LINE OF DANCING MEN SURROUND ALL THE WOMEN OF THE CAMP

1. The men carry lighted torches and in a single file dance to the border of the common camp where the women are huddled in a group. Two old women beat the ground with clubs or yam sticks. 852 535

1. After this they gather some bushes, put them in their armpits and, carrying lighted torches of paper bark, leave the men's ceremonial grounds and start dancing toward the main camp.

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[17] Cf. Djungguan, page 278.

852 Meanwhile the women, under the guidance of an old man, leave their camp, form themselves into a solid, circular mass, and sit down in the territory between the main camp and the men's ceremonial grounds. They hide under their ainmaras (mats). Two old women walk up and down in front of the other women, beating the ground with clubs or digging sticks, and telling the young women that they cannot eat certain taboo foods or they will become ill and probably die; they will have sores on their bodies and rot away and harm their clan's people as well.

With a line of men, two Yiritja water snakes (kak-a-war) appear before the women and uninitiated boys for the first time. The snakes call out in high tones, and the women answer in the same high trill in which they reply to the bull roarer. The men dance in a circle [431] around the women. All the women make presents to the men, which are turned over to the two Yiritja snakes. The gift is obligatory, under penalty of illness and possible death sent by Muit, to whom the presents are supposed to be made. The two old women walk up and down, beating the ground with their clubs, and shout.

Their words can be freely translated: "Muit, do not come out any more and swallow us, for now we are clean and no longer impure":

Wal-mi Come out	Nin-ne Stop there
Nin-ni-niki Stop there	Yuk-ka norl-tur No swallow
Na-ma-tung Make us good (from)	Ir-rk-tun Sickness
Nangul Dui-yung-ur (from) Blood sickness	
Mar-yalng-nao We can live good	Mar-tjin-naerao We can be healthy (no sick trouble)

852 535 773 *Native Interpretation.*—The line of men which dances around the women huddled under the mats is the snake, and is also the two Wawilak women. The symbolic significance of the various men changes during the dance.—"When the men come out into the camp they are the two old Wawilak women at first. Then two Yiritja men at the side call out and then the line of dancers changes to proper

men. When they go around the women they are snakes. The two old 852
women who beat the ground are those two old Wawilak women who 535
beat the ground when Yurlunggur tried to swallow them. They are 773
beating Muit. They tell those young people they can't eat every kind of food or they will get sick and maybe die and they will have sores on their bodies and rot away. The old women walk up and down and say, 'Muit, don't you come out any more and swallow these people. We are good people, we are clean.'"

Other accounts say that when the men come out of the ceremonial grounds in a line and dance toward the group of women they are the snake who has smelled the blood of the two old women because "They are painted in that blood [meaning they have the blood from a man's arm, which is the symbolical menstrual blood of the Wawilak women]. They paint their noses and over their eyes; when the snake swallowed the women he bit them and the blood came. This makes them Wongar women too."

"The snake calls out to all the other snakes and they come up and 852
circle around the women. [See the Djungguan for a like inter-
pretation.] The women are in their paper-bark house. When they take 773
their mats off, that means they have stood up before the snake swal- 382
lows them. The red ocher on their faces [the women's] is blood from where that snake bit them when they were swallowed. The two Yiritja snakes who call out are the spirits of the two children of the Wawilak women. They cry out and cry out."

"The presents the women give to the two [Yiritja] snakes go inside 852
the two snakes. Those two women are inside the snake. These presents 773
are swallowed by the snake just the same as those two women were
swallowed by the snake before." The presents given by the women are 431
kept by the Dua leaders of the ceremony, but not before they have been put on the snake emblem (i.e., given to Muit; see E 2 below).

E. The Yiritja Messengers Leave to Invite the Other Clans to the Ceremony 852

1. The two Yiritja snakes leave to invite the other clans to the ceremony.
2. A symbolic well is dug, which all the dancers enter after the dance sequence of Section C is repeated.
3. The messenger snakes are sent out again to announce Gunabibi, while Section D is repeated and the presents given to the snake by the women are displayed.

●852 [The activities of the foregoing sections, largely preparatory, have involved only the home camp. The arrival of the visiting clans marks the beginning of the most significant phases of the Gunabibi.]

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1. The men then leave and go back to their ceremonial camp. The two Yiritja snakes are given a human hair string decorated with parrot feathers and tipped with white cockatoo feathers. It is a ceremonial "message stick" and represents the snake. The men leave with the message and go to the other clans, inviting them to the ceremony.

[535] 2. Meanwhile the song and dance cycle of Section C 3 is gone through, starting with the unmated male sea gull and ending with the four Muits. At the same time a large round hole is dug in the men's ceremonial grounds by the members of the Yiritja moiety. All the animals, birds and plants which dance get in the well with the two Yiritja snakes. In theory the two snakes leave with a message stick; but in practice this seldom happens, unless they go to nearby clans. They wait until the end of the ceremony, centered around the taboo hole, before departing; or if they do leave, two other men enact the rôles of the Yiritja snakes. The leader sings over them, and they all dance in the well as one people.

852 A month has supposedly gone by since the departure of the messengers, and the moon is once more new. Once again the men put bushes under their arms, carry lighted torches, leave their own ceremonial ground, and dance out near the women's ground, where [431] they surround the group of women. The old women repeat their previous performance. Gifts are again made by the women.

All the men, including the two Yiritja snakes carrying the presents made by the women, return to the men's camp again. A forked stick railing is placed around the taboo well and the gifts are hung on it. The Dua leaders of the Gunabibi ceremony keep the gifts after this offering has been made to Muit.

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3. The two Yiritja snakes and the initiated son or younger brother of the leader of the Gunabibi (in other words, two Yiritja moiety men and one Dua moiety man) are given a mandelprindi and told to go to all the clans and tell them they are ready for the final phases of the ceremony. The Yiritja snakes are sometimes spoken of as the waku of Yurlunggur, and the son of the leader is "all the same as the snake. He can't sing out, but the Yiritja snakes do it for him." The Yiritja men whirl the bull roarer outside the camps of the various clans as a signal that the final dance will start and also as an invitation and virtual command for all who hear to appear.

At the various camps messengers supposedly go through some of

the performances that have been held at the original camp. The 852
sounds they make are the voice of the snake. The women's reply from 202
the other camps is that of the two old Wawilak women. The hole dug is a representation of a Mirrirmina well and is sung over to be made such by the power names of that well. The sequence of dances is the 852
same sea-gull-to-Muit cycle; the unmated men dance first and then 535
the females. The dancers who symbolize the unmated males and females do not go in the well. Only mated groups of males and females enter.

Native Interpretation.—The reason for keeping the unmated male 852
and female dancers out of the well, according to the leader of several of the ceremonies, is the same as that given for separating the males 825
and female in the cycle of songs in Section C. "That snake is all the 535
same as a man.—[Here he was speaking of the rock python and other snakes who are the living counterparts of the totemic spirits.] He walks about single [a male dances up to the entrance to the hole]. A woman snake walks about single and lays eggs. By and by at stringy-bark flower time in the dry season they find each other. Mobs of these snakes find each other and they copulate and lay eggs for children [all the dancers go inside the hole]. When the wet season comes one man goes one way and another man goes another way looking for rat and lizard food. By and by those eggs break and the children of the snake come out. They walk about single, the female goes one way, and the male another. The dry season comes and a mob comes out and they copulate and make eggs again and go along a hole because this is a house for them." When the snakes congregate "all kinds mixed up, they all go into the one hole for copulating. In the [early] morning up in the big rocks before daylight they come out a little way and copulate. Two more come out, man and woman, man and woman, and copulate and then go into the hole."

F. The Kartdjur Is Made and the Gunabibi Well Abandoned

1. A crescent-shaped trench, the kartdjur, is dug, and the well abandoned. 852
2. The snakes dance in the kartdjur; the copulation of the libidinous man and woman and of the two rock pythons.

1. After the messengers leave, the round tabu hole is abandoned 852
and a larger crescent-shaped trench is dug. The trench (kart-djur) is 535
four or five feet deep; the earth is piled along its concave sides. It is about ten feet long, and the width is sufficient for two men to pass

852 by each other while dancing inside it. While the messengers are away and the new trench is being dug, the Gunabibi cycle of songs and 535 dances from the single male sea gull to the four Muits is gone through by the leader and his chorus.

2. The snakes are allowed to dance in the kartdjur, but none of the others except the palm tree are allowed to go inside it.

After the Gunabibi cycle, a single man filled with sexual desire and 852 looking for a mate is danced. Then a man representing a single woman, 535 also sexually hungry and looking for a mate, is danced. And finally the 831 two together perform a dance; meeting at the entrance to the kartdjur, they simulate copulation but do not enter the "well."

The moon is now full, and people have been coming from the other clans to participate in the ceremony. Messages are usually brought by them that the two Yiritja snakes are coming with more people. Visitors and messengers take part in the dance around the kartdjur. All the men in the ceremony dance rock pythons copulating. The last dance of the entire series is that of the blue-tongued lizard. He dances in from a long way in the bush and goes inside the kartdjur. The appearance of this symbol indicates to all that a transition is taking place in the Gunabibi.

Native Interpretation.—"The kartdjur is that head inside the woman's vagina. It is all the same as her marn-bu [clitoris]. The crescent shape [shown by curve of fingers] is the way the two women laid down in the house before the snake swallowed them."

G. YERMERLINDI

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1. The Yeritja make Yermerlindi—two poles symbolizing the snake and a palm tree, and covered with blood.
2. The Yiritja camp; Dua give presents to the Yiritja.
3. The neophytes are placed on the kartdjur and sweat is placed on their eyes. Various dances include a clown element, the opossums, the Wawilak sisters, and finally blue-tongued lizard.
4. The initiates see Yermerlindi and are instructed and warned by the old men.
5. The Yermerlindi are knocked down and put in the kartdjur, and the men put blood on themselves.

852 1. During the last period, when the kartdjur is being used, the 778 Yiritja moiety men participating in the Gunabibi ceremony have been making the yermerlindi emblems. They are about fifteen feet long and two and a half wide. They have a pole as a solid core and are

surrounded with grass and covered with paper bark. The bark is covered 852
with human blood, on which is pasted birds' down or bush cotton, 778
and on one yermerlindi a representation of Muit is painted in human [532]
blood against the white-feather or cotton background. This yermerlindi is another emblem of the rock python totem. The other is called a palm tree emblem, but it is known to be a python totem too, for it has a snake design upon it. The two are stood up by the Yiritja men. They say to each other, "Oh! They are true Wongars [totemic spirits]." The leader sings a song to prevent sickness since the yermerlindi are very powerful because Muit is inside them.

2. The Yiritja camp, where the yermerlindi is made, although still 852
on the men's ceremonial ground, is placed at one side of the actual 778
dancing ground. No Dua man can go near it. The Dua leader asks 616
from time to time by circumlocution if the yermerlindi is made, even when the emblem is completed.

While the Yiritja are making the yermerlindi, the Dua men send [431]
presents of food to them for making the yermerlindi. The Yiritja men send the Dua presents of kangaroo fat and red ocher with which to paint the Yiritja dancers.

The Dua leader of the Gunabibi once more asks if the Yiritja have finished their work, and they reply that yermerlindi is ready. The leader says, "One day more and then we will dance with yermerlindi." The Yiritja never say that yermerlindi is ready until the two messengers have returned with the visitors.

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3. Following the blue-tongued lizard dance which marks the end of a phase of the ceremony, the Gunabibi pauses so the men may eat their evening meal.

Later in the evening the neophytes are placed on the raised ground on the concave side of the kartdjur. Two leaders now conduct the ceremony. A new phase of the Gunabibi has begun. A long shallow trench of some fifty feet is extended from one end of the kartdjur. The neophytes have bushes placed under their armpits. The Yiritja snakes and the Dua leaders put their own arm sweat on the eyes of all the initiates.

All those who are not dancing stand on the raised ground with the 852
chorus. Two dancers sing reed warbler in a small piping tone which 533
forms a ludicrous contrast to the heavy male chorus. The onlookers in
chorus appreciate the deliberate humor of the contrast. The clown element, 522
although not definitely and elaborately developed, is present in this part of the ceremony as well as later.

852 535 [534] A large group of men, covered with white clay blown on them from the mouths of their fellow dancers, dance around the kartdjur and then go back to the end of the connecting trench and dance down to the kartdjur again. They are opossum dancers and grunt in time to the beating together of the two leaders' boomerangs. As they dance, the opossums and leaders start filling up the kartdjur with the loose earth around it.

The opossums are followed by two dancers who represent the Wawilak sisters. They have paper-bark bundles under their arms to represent their babies. At the end of each song of the chorus the dancers cry in a high whine in imitation of a newly born child. They squat inside the trough and cry again. The crying, in contrast with the heavy voices of the men's chorus, again has a note of absurdity in it and is a source of much laughter.

The last dance is the blue-tongued lizard. He is painted across his back with a white horizontal stripe. Keeping his legs very stiff, he wriggles along on his abdomen, with a wave-like motion, to the kartdjur. When he stops inside it the leader intones, "Gunabibi! Gunabibi!" over him. The hole is further filled until the greater part of it is covered.

852 778 4. The singing now changes to the song, yermerlindi. A fire is made. The Dua leader cries to the neophytes, "Look! See what you can see! I think Bapa Indi is coming out of the water."

The two Muit emblems are brought in; two men hold them upright with the rock pythons painted in blood on the white surfaces gleaming in the light of the many fires before the eyes of the frightened initiates.

The neophytes are told by the old men that the emblems are real pythons, that the spirit of Muit is inside them, and that they are very dangerous, even though they have been made by men, for Muit now walks around the jungle like a man. They are also warned to tell nothing of what they have seen to the women and uninitiated boys.

5. Two men bring in a pole and hold it horizontally about waist-high from the ground, on the concave side of the kartdjur. The yermerlindi are stood on the convex side. They are pushed over and allowed to hit the pole, while all the chorus cries out in shrill tones. They are picked up and again allowed to fall. This continues until the feather headpieces on the top of the emblems fall off.

852 The yermerlindi are put in the kartdjur. The grass around them is burned and the inner poles are charred. While this is being done,

852 blood is let from several men's arms, and as the fire burns, all the men cover themselves with blood and kangaroo fat.

852 778 *Native Interpretation*:—The palm tree totemic emblem is supposed to be the palm tree "on the outside, but inside it is all the same as a snake."—"That first ranga is called the palm tree ranga because the Yiritja make it, but the inside [sacred] meaning is all the same as the snake. When we stand them up all the Yiritja say, 'they are Wongars all right,' and the leader sings to keep off sickness, for Wongar is inside them and might make us sick."

852 778 776 There is no question but that the Murngin believe the totemic emblems have the totemic spirit inside them, and there is considerable evidence that the totem is believed to take possession of the emblem and move around as a snake does. On one of the nights that yermerlindi totems were first shown, one of the Yiritja men came into my camp and announced to some of the natives and myself that he had gone over to the Yiritja ground where that Wongar snake was, meaning the totemic emblem. He said, "I am afraid of that one. I am small boss for him [younger brother of some of the leaders]. He is close up to the water when he is that way, and maybe he will walk about and kill me and everybody. Yermerlindi always walks about." He meant that when the totemic emblem had been made, sung over, and completed, it was in much the same condition as the totemic spirit is when it lives in the totemic water hole; and with the totemic spirit in the emblem and outside of the water hole, it was dangerous to man. This same man told me of an experience in another Gunabibi ceremony when Yermerlindi was left by himself for a night: Yermerlindi got up and walked around by himself. The discussions among the men during the ceremonies all proved that the statements of this one man are generally believed to be true of ordinary behavior for the yermerlindi emblem. There is ample direct statement from a large number of natives that when the Yiritja men make the totemic emblems for the Gunabibi they sing over them, and this puts power and the totemic spirit in the yermerlindi.

776 781 A night after a Gunabibi ceremony when the yermerlindi was shown, one of the men had the following experience: He couldn't sleep and his sleeplessness continued for some time. Presently he heard the whistle of Muit for him, he said. He raised his head and listened. Muit whistled again. The man listened very carefully to make sure it wasn't something or someone around him, but he heard it again. He

776 laid his head back and went straight to sleep. This story indicates again
781 how sure everyone is that the totemic spirit is about during the time of
the ceremonies which celebrate his power.

H. The Ceremonial Exchange of Wives

852 1. Distant tribal brothers exchange wives.
786 2. The camp dance of the sexual pair and the exchange of gifts.
3. The night of ceremonial intercourse.

837 1. When the men from distant clans come in to see and participate in the Gunabibi ceremony, the older men, if they do not know their kinship to one another, work out their tribal relationships after much talk; this is mental exercise appreciated by all the more intelligent Murngin. When a local man discovers that a certain visitor from a far clan is his tribal brother, he sends his younger brother to inform this person that he may have the local man's wife for ceremonial copulation at the end of the Gunabibi ceremony. He sends presents along with [431] the younger brother. The recipient, either through his own younger brother or through the messenger, offers his own wife in exchange, and also sends presents.

This exchange of wives for ceremonial intercourse at the close of the Gunabibi serves as the grand finale of the entire ceremony. As a consequence, it is considered very dangerous and is surrounded with a fairly intricate ritual.

The above is the formal and correct way of exchanging wives for ceremonial purposes, but there are several other methods. Sometimes men agree, without the intermediation of messengers, to exchange their wives. Sometimes a man and woman arrange matters without first gaining the consent of the women's husband; but without the final consent of the woman's spouse, this could not be recognized as legal procedure.

2. After the evening meal, and before the men return to the ceremonial grounds, they sit down in a half-circle around the fire and the women dance on the other side in front of them. The women and men [292] wear circlets of fiber string around the head above the ears and across the forehead to indicate that the exchange arrangement has been made. While the women dance, various men arise, walk over to the women [431] and hand them presents of food, red ocher, or some other object of value. The woman presented with such a gift is the one with whom arrangments have supposedly been made for ceremonial copulation.

The man who is the wife's partner later privately again gives her

The man who is the wife's partner later privately again gives her
presents of spears or tobacco, red ocher, and the ordinary presents that 852
are reciprocally exchanged. She accepts the present, keeps part of it,
and gives the rest to her husband. The natives, both men and women, 786
are much more interested in the ritual of giving and taking than in the 837
value of the presents, which is never very great. There is usually consid- 431
erable joking and amusement during this dance. Although intercourse
is not to be consummated between the ceremonial partners until the last
night of the ceremony, and then only for ceremonial purposes, there are
a considerable number of clandestine meetings between these mates
before that time. This is recognized by all, even though it is not con-
sidered regular or entirely proper.

After a man has had sexual intercourse with another man's wife, the 852
latter male comes to him and puts his sweat on the legs and arms of 786
his wife's partner so that the one who has been with his wife won't be 837
"sick" from it. The position taken in the sexual act differs from the
customary one (see page 78) in that the woman sits on the ground on 833
the back of her buttocks. The trunk of the body leans back and at an
angle from the legs, with the hands on the ground in back of the
body to support it. The man puts his legs under hers and his hands
around her so that the pudenda meet in closer contact than if he
lay on her.

3. For the final occasion the men and women partners are heavily 852
painted. On this night one woman may have sexual relations with 786
several men because there is always a lack of women in the group
attending the ceremony. If a woman shows a dislike for her ceremonial 837
partner and refuses to join him, she is told she will be ill and make her 626
husband and ceremonial mate ill, and she is forced to comply with her
husband's demand. If a man refuses, the woman sends word that Muit
will make him ill, and that she too will be sick.

Native Interpretation.—The ceremonial exchange of wives and par- 852
ticipation in ritual intercourse is thought to be absolutely obligatory 786
on the men and women. When a man or woman objects, the older 837
men insist, as does the partner, that the person must do this or "Muit 773
will make him ill" and the partner will become ill too. In speaking of
the ceremonial sexual exchange I was told many times, "This makes
everybody clean. It makes everyone's body good until next dry season."

The oldest leader of the Gunabibi in the area, in many ways the man best-informed on this ceremony, said to me, "Those two women [the Wawilak sisters], they walked down from the Wawilak country

852 786 837 713 and they made a corroboree like this one. Two Wawilak men came up to those women and 'played' with them. 'I think, sister, we will put white feathers all over and make this one [Gunabibi] higher and more dear [valuable] than the Djungguan. We will make this one so that every man can come and play with us.' When the Wawilak men played with them, those two sisters said these words, 'We will make this corroboree more high for people to play with each other. We are Wongar women, but when people come after us they can play with their women. It is better that everybody comes with their women and all meet together at a Gunabibi and play with each other, and then nobody will start having sweethearts the rest of the time.'" This same man said, "Everybody paints himself not for nothing. We don't take this blood out of ourselves for nothing and paint ourselves with it. We don't sleep that night, and if a woman says, 'I won't go to that corroboree place with you,' the man says, 'If you don't go with me you are going to be dead.' Sometimes we kill that woman by magic, and throw spears at them if they won't do it."

852 I. THE FORKED POLES ARE ERECTED

1. The ridgepole is placed on two forked poles.
2. The Yiritja snakes and the initiates are placed on it.
3. The women and children of the camp gather by it.
4. The line of men dances around the initiates and women.
5. The taking of bread by the initiates.
6. The initiated boys are taken to the ceremonial ground and their forehead bands removed.

1. The following morning, at the boundary line between the men's ceremonial ground and the general camp, two forked poles are placed in the ground about six feet apart from each other, and a thick connecting pole is placed in their forks. It is about four feet off the ground. The whole framework reproduces part of the framework of an ordinary house or platform. The pole is hung with branches from nearby trees so that the space from pole to ground is completely covered.

2. The two Yiritja snakes go first to the structure and sit down in the forks of each pole. They lean back against the forks and face each other. They cry out with the same shrill call heard in the earlier ceremonies of the Gunabibi. Since dawn the bull roarers have been sounding and the women answering from the general camp. The initiates are placed under the bushes that hang down from the ridgepole; they

hold on to it with their two hands. Although their feet are on the ground they are supposed to be hanging from the pole. 852

3. Several old men now go to the women's camp, gather all the women and children into one group, and march with them toward this ceremonial structure. The women have smeared themselves with red ocher; they advance dancing. Two old women run along beside the rest of the women and the children, beating the ground with their yam sticks and calling out to the great snake (see page 299, where they address Muit). The women sit down about twenty-five feet to one side of the structure. 852 535

4. All the men dancers remain about thirty yards from the scene, hidden in palm-tree thickets or mangrove jungles. They are decorated with bushes under their arms. The men dance into the clearing in single file. They dance around the initiates, the two Yiritja snakes, and the women and children. The two Yiritja snakes cry out and the women answer. The women then arise and return to the main camp. The men sit down in a line beside the ridgepole, and paralleling it. The initiates are taken from the pole at the same time and placed at the back of a line of men.

5. The seated men hold out their left arms (the far side from the forked pole) and the initiates crawl under them. They shake their shoulders as they advance to the head of the line. When each initiate crawls under the arm of the man who heads the line and who sits by the forked pole, the Yiritja snake sitting on this forked pole hands the neophyte a piece of vegetable (usually ground palm nut). The boy takes it, puts it in his mouth, and spits it out again. The particle of food is covered up. When the last neophyte has enacted this rite, the forked-stick phase of the ritual is finished. 852

6. That night mandelprindi sounds again and the women reply. The leader gathers the initiates in a circle at the edge of the men's camp and the men dance around the boys. They sing the same songs as those sung when they danced around the women and boys during the forked-stick rite. With the men leading and the boys bringing up the rear, the whole group of males then dance off in single file to the men's ceremonial place. Here the boys' forehead bands (gar-lam-ba) are removed without ceremony. They are given to the leader, who is supposed to keep them for the next Gunabibi. The older men usually elect to wear forehead pieces and also now give their bands to the leader. This ends the Gunabibi except for ceremonial purification. 852 535

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773 *Native Interpretation.*—The forked sticks with the pole across are the house of the two women. The ritual of the women who answer the two snakes and beat the ground with their clubs parallels that of the two old women in Section D. The men in the bush are the snake. The boys who are hanging from the rafter are flying foxes. When the women move back and the men sit down in a line under the rafter, "This means one people, and the rafter is the snake and the people are Muit food.—They are all the same as the birimbir of Bapa himself. —They are Muit and they are one people." When the boys crawl from behind the line of men to one end of the line, they are brought to the tail of Muit and "They are the young snakes of that big one." When the boys crawl up to the head of the snake and receive the food from the head (the Yiritja snake sitting on the forked pole), "This means the children all want food [the children of the snake] and the snake spews out the two women and they [the children] eat it [the two women] and give it back to him [spit out the food again]."

All the above was told to me by the leaders of the Gunabibi, both during the actual portrayal of the ceremony itself and in conversations during the hours of rest between the morning and evening dances.

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776
825 The significance of the flying fox to the Murngin is that he is a mokoi or trickster spirit of the dead who lives in the bush. He is a generally recognized symbol to all of the spirit that does not go into the water hole but goes out into the bush or the jungle or to the Morning Star Island at time of death (see Barnumbir myth, page 524). —"A flying fox is all the same as the dead spirit from the bush. It is Dua."[18]

852 J. Ceremonial Purification

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1. The men and women paint themselves with red ocher and kangaroo fat. The neophytes are brushed with smoking ironwood branches.

[766
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841] [18] When an uncircumcised child dies, its mother has the wings of a flying fox painted on her shoulders and the body of the fox painted on her abdomen. "This flying fox is the birimbir spirit of that dead baby. This is done for both Yiritja and Dua mothers and babies." The same painting is sometimes put on a woman when she has had her first menses. The woman is placed inside a hut and, when she wants to move, is given two yam sticks with which to turn over. The yam-stick movement is ceremenial and symbolic of the movement of the two old women who walked with the aid of a yam stick in each hand.

[783] The condition of the boys, or women who are menstruating, of the mother of a dead child, etc., is said to be djn-ak, which means ritually unclean. "If a mother or mari or yeppa sleeps close to dead baby that sweat comes out and makes the mother unclean. Women put red ocher on after this. No one can take food from these women until the bones are dug up and she is painted by her husband with flying fox."

1. A week or ten days afterward all the men and women who have 852
participated for the first time in the ceremony are painted with red 302
ocher and kangaroo fat, at least twice. The last time a fire is made of 783
ironwood, and green branches are held in it and brushed all over the
initiate.

Native Interpretation.—This ritual is to keep the participants from
becoming ill and to prevent them from being hurt by any of the
animals seen in the Gunabibi dances. The use of red ocher for purifica- [751]
tion purposes is general. It is one of the recognized mechanisms of the
Murngin ritually to prevent or stop sickness. At the end of the Gunabibi the following comment was made in a variety of forms: "After the next rain a man can come out and see a lot of emus and kangaroos and all kinds of animals. He will say, 'My word, we sang him good in that last Gunabibi.'"

THE ULMARK CEREMONY

The Ulmark ceremony is performed in the dry season. It may last a 884
month, a season, or possibly two dry seasons. In rare cases it may be shortened to a few days. The length of time depends on the leader and the old men associated with him.

Like the Djungguan and the Gunabibi, the Ulmark too is an age-grading ceremony. The boy who undergoes its initiation is placed definitely in the men's age grade. The Ulmark is recent in this area and is still being learned by the older men. It is not yet felt to be obligatory for all men to pass through it to attain social adulthood.

Human blood is not used in the Ulmark ceremony. It is the only one of the four major ceremonies belonging to the Wawilak cycle that does not use blood. Kangaroo grease serves more or less the same symbolical function.

New feather strings are made in preparation for the Ulmark, to be 884
used as ornaments in it. The work of collecting the feathers and making 301
the string is supposed to take a month or more and depends on the supply of feathers available and the amount desired by the men for the dance. Four men who later play the rôle of kangaroos gather the feathers from the various camps and take them to the men's ceremonial grounds at the camp where the ceremony is to be held.

The first three sections are largely preliminary. The first two sections 884
take place simultaneously.

the stone fire, and the women around them. Ironwood leaves (maipin) are put in the fire and a smoking branch is brushed over all the males and females who have been in the ceremony. To make a heavy steam, wet grass is put on the fire and the neophytes placed over it so that both mouth and anus are supposedly filled with purifying steam. This is to allow the young men to eat the large game which up to this time has been taboo to them. 884 783

Native Interpretation.—All the informants insisted that the interpretation of the steaming of the initiates is the same as in the Djungguan (Section H). The eating of the bread is a general symbol of communion which will be treated later.

General Summary of the Sections of the Ulmark

The ritual dances of the Ulmark ceremony divide themselves into two main groups of symbols: (1) the food animals' running away from the two women, and (2) the snake's swallowing the women and animals. 884 535

THE MARNDIELLA CEREMONY

A. Preparations

1. The fathers are consulted. The boys are decorated. 852●

1. The Marndiella is used as a circumcision rite and belongs to the Wawilak group. It is usually held when it is felt that certain boys are too large to be allowed to remain uncircumcised for another year and when the time is short and the wet season is at hand. In other words, it is used when the Djungguan ceremony is considered too long for the time at their command. It is the shortest of the four general tribal ceremonies centered around the Wawilak. The Marndiella never comes first by preference and is only used as an expedient. However, at times the Marndiella is prolonged, principally because of the Murngin's keen pleasure in all ceremonies and because it is felt to be not quite fitting to rush a ceremony through in so short a time.

The ceremony starts the afternoon before the circumcision is to take place. The leader in this ritual, as in all the others, is a clan ceremonial director. He confers with the fathers of the boys to gain their permission, or to set a time for the circumcision when the fathers have requested him to make their boys young men. On the afternoon of the day chosen to start the ceremony the boys are taken to the [614]

852 men's ceremonial grounds where they are decorated for the coming ritual.

852 302 White string is put on their arms. The torso, the upper arms down to the elbows, and the upper part of the legs to the knees are painted solidly with charcoal. The lower arms and legs are covered with red ocher, as are the face and hair. Lines of white feathers are glued with orchid-bulb juice from each shoulder across to the opposite hip so that the lines cross at the navel. A band of white feathers is put around the body at the belt line. A bark forehead band is painted with white clay and tied across the forehead so that the white band outlines the upper part of the face. Lines of white feathers run from ear to ear on the lower part of the face. This ends the first day's preparations. The women meanwhile have been gathering food for the morrow's ceremony.

Native Interpretation.—The natives say, "Marndiella is quick because the snake came quick. The design painted on the boy's torso symbolizes a woman's 'harness' because he is all the same as a woman."

B. The Song Sequence

852 533

1. The men cut their arms to make the blood flow, and a cycle of songs is sung.
2. The initiates have spears thrown at them.

1. In the morning the men cut their arms, as they do in the Gunabibi and Djungguan, for blood to be used in the ritual for both its magical power and its adhesive qualities. While the cutting is taking place the leader and the other men sing the following cycle of songs, time being kept by the beating of singing sticks:

(1) Flying fox (Yari-war-la)
(2) A small honeybee—Dua
(3) A large Dua honeybee
(4) The scales of the small fresh-water fish (Bi-dji-ma)
(5) Water ripples
(6) Flower of the water lily (La-barn-dja)—Yiritja
(7) Water-lily stalk (O-lo-nair-i)—Yiritja
(8) Flight of the dollar bird (Yam-yam-ming-o)—Dua
(9) Fruit tree's fruit (Djar-la-larn-a)—Yiritja
(10) Leaf of this tree (Gir-in-gir-in)—Yiritja
(11) Flower of this tree (Gar-dok-gar-dok-me-la)—Yiritja

(Children eat this food more than anyone else and it is associated with them as candy would be with European children.)

(12) Domesticated female dog (Yair-a-wa-din-ya)—Yiritja
(13) Male dog (Gorn-daort borola)—Yiritja
(14) Wild female dog (Gu-lang-na-ngang-ba)—Yiritja
(15) Wild male dog (Wart-pir-i-djin-na)—Yiritja
(16) Wild dog pup (Dir-a-ra-ko)—Yiritja
(17) Big gray kangaroo (Kai-tjim-bal)—Yiritja
(18) His face (Bo-ko-nar-wil-li)—Yiritja
(19) Hop of the kangaroo (Lor-o-to-djin-ya)—Yiritja
(When the big kangaroo song is sung two men stand up and dance in the manner described in the Djungguan ceremony. Later the entire group dances songs. They do not paint for this part of the ritual.)
(20) Buttocks of the kangaroo (Kjar-la-ba-ba)—Yiritja
(21) Path to the Kangaroo water hole (Dir-go-go)—Yiritja
(22) Depression in the ground approaching the water hole (Barng-in-dal brang-in-dal)—Yiritja
(23) Water hole for the kangaroo's drink (Lar-lar-la-war-ain-yi)—Yiritja
(24) Parasite found on the yam (Djo-go-mirn-nir-i)—Dua
(25) Salty-tasting yam's leaf (Si-ba-ma mai-al-pong-o)—Dua
(26) Teeth of the big kangaroo (Lir-a-mai-yor-o)—Yiritja
(27) Young lily (Dji-ma-rang-gal)—Yiritja
(28) The young of the gray kangaroo (Da-gan-da)—Yiritja
(29) Fire circle used to hunt kangaroos (Gan-djarl-gar-ra)—Yiritja
(30) Cycad palm nut (Bal-mar-din-gur-a)—Yiritja
(31) The shell of the cycad palm nut (Pal-mar-yir-in-i)—Yiritja
(32) Cycad palm tree (Din-gu)—Yiritja
(33) Acacia tree (nin-bal-ma)—Dua
(34) Flower of the acacia tree (Warng-gi-ir-i)—Dua
(35) Leaf of the acacia tree (Yun-bar-djun-bar)—Dua
(36) Trumpet's wood (Ma-rin-bor mar-ba)—Dua
(37) A small night bird (Tar-bo tar-bo)—Yiritja

This sequence of songs is repeated a number of times. The men sing after the evening meal until quite late at night. Sometimes the ceremony is continued until the next morning. In the morning the

852 men paint themselves on the ceremonial grounds for the morning's dance, and then sit down in a circle within the general camp. They throw spears at the boys who are to be circumcised and then take them inside the ceremonial grounds. The chief animals represented are dog, kangaroo, and honeybee. The ceremonial leader, when the men have almost completed their painting, returns to the camp. He has a large pair of singing sticks.

Native Interpretation.—The native interpretation of this second section will be discussed in the general analysis, Chapter XI.

C. The Women's Mat Dance

1. The young initiate (or initiates) and his mother's brother's daughter are put under an ainmara.
2. Fires are lighted and clan names called out.

1. The men who do not figure in the dancing, but who take part in the ceremony as members of the men's chorus, go with the leader to the main camp.

In the cleared space in the center of the camp the initiate is put under the woman's mat with his feet sticking out from under it. A young woman, preferably his galle, is put under the ainmara with him. The boy's mother (arndi) and his mother's mother (mari) stand over him. They wave their head circlets over him because this [262] is supposed to take away any harmful effect his eating the flesh of large animals may have had—in other words, from having eaten any of the things permitted up until this time, but which from now on he will not be allowed to include in his diet until he is married and has a child.

852 2. The leader and chorus sing fire (Laid-dal-ma-yao-yao) during this part of the ceremony. Fires are lighted at this point, which is a 533 signal for the dancers to come out. The taboo names of many clan territories are called out by the leader and chorus. The women slap their thighs and keep time with the men's singing and the beating of the singing sticks. All the women are painted with red ocher 852 except the two who stand over the boy. They are painted in a rough [302] imitation of him. The women sit while the men stand. The men have their spear-throwers lying on the back of their necks and a hand on each end of the weapon. The scene at this part of the Marndiella corresponds to that at the end of the Djungguan at the time of the circumcision.

Native Interpretation.—"When a boy is put under an ainmara, that house is the house of the two old Wawilak women."—"Those women dancing around the ainmaras are told to do this to stop sickness and so the boy won't have trouble where he is cut."—"The couple under the ainmaras are the two Wawilak women," from the point of view of the myth and ritual. 852 773

"Marndiella was sung first by the two women before they sang the Djungguan and Gunabibi to try to stop the rain, but they couldn't stop it and the snake came and swallowed them."

D. The Dog Dancers Enter

1. Two men dance in the main camp as dogs.

1. A dog dancer comes into the dance ground of the main camp after circling about in the nearby bush and on the camp ground. He has a high peaked hat on of the same type that is used in the Gunabibi. While he comes toward the group, all the taboo names of the country belonging to the Mandelpui, Liaalaomir, and Wawilak clans are cried out by the leader and male chorus. Another dog who has on only a forehead band instead of the high hat approaches the group from another quarter. The first dog comes in and smells the feet of the boy and girl and sits down at one end of the line of men. The other dog does likewise and sits at the other end. The boy gets up then and pulls a feather from off the decorated men. 852 535

When the boy pulls the feather off it means: "Those two women had that done to them when the rain knocked the feathers off when they danced around the bark house."

Native Interpretation.—This dance "means that boy is all the same as iguana, bandicoot, opossum, and kangaroo, and that dog has come to catch him. Those two women made it that way."

E. A Line of Men Dance into the Women's Camp with Lighted Torches

1. The boy, or boys, who are to be circumcised are once more placed under the ainmara, and a line of men with torches dance around them.

[302]

1. The men then go out to the ceremonial ground and paint themselves with blood and feathers. They form a long line and dance into the women's camp carrying lighted torches of paper bark. The boy has been placed under the woman's mat and they dance around him. The leader stands by the men and sings torch fire (War-nan-bor-yo-

852 535 yor-o), honey (Bar-a-gar-la), and honeybee hive (Warl-kin-di). While the leader sings, the chorus shrilly cries, "Ai—ai!!" Two birds who frequent the salt plains (Ta-bu-ta-bu) dance in while the chorus sings the name of these birds. The leader taps them with his singing sticks and makes them go over and sit down in the line formed by the chorus. The following dancers appear and are treated in the same way by the leader: honeybee, tiger snake (darpa), leech (djal-ng-nin), and two dogs. The hat worn by one of the dogs is knocked off.

The whole chorus then dance Dua honeybee. After this they tie bunches of leaves to their ankles and, beginning with the flying fox, the entire sequence of dances is performed again.

[773] *Native Interpretation.*—"That line of men come in with blood and feathers on them. They are snakes and they dance around the camp of the two Wawilak women."

852 304 783 F. The Circumcision and Steaming Rites

1. The same dances are used for the steaming ceremony of the Marndiella as in the Djungguan.

1. The boy is then circumcised. The same procedure and method of cutting are followed here as in the Djungguan (Section H), and the purificatory fire rite is performed in exactly the same manner.

Native Interpretation.—The same set of symbolical ideas operates here as in the Djungguan.

000 The next chapter turns to a consideration of the Djunkgao myth and ritual cycle, and the reader may turn immediately to the interpretative chapter if he is interested in discovering the Murngin symbolic processes.

196 they did in the first ceremony. They walk with spears in their hands,
535 which, at the moment, symbolizes the yam sticks of the two Djunkgao sisters. They continue until they come to the ring of women, as described in the duni or red-ocher part of the ceremony. The kingfishers also represent the modern Murngin man looking for food and sexual intercourse. In a way, too, they are Wongar yolno. After the kingfishers have performed a dance around the women they thrust the short spears among the group to symbolize the Wongar yolno's original breaking of taboo against sexual relations with women of one's own group; then they return to the men's ceremonial ground.

G. The Brush Turkey Totem Is Danced and Displayed

1. The totem emblem of a turkey is danced in the Narra ground.
2. The initiates are shown the totem.

[302] 1. Some distance back from the men's dance ground, groups of men have been painting themselves like turkeys. They represent the brush turkey totem. Fires are built all around the men just as fires are built on the plains when turkeys are hunted. The turkeys dance through the fires while an old man beats the singing sticks and leads them toward the men's dance ground. They carry the totem. One man dances a pantomime of a brush turkey out in the plains.

196 2. Small boys are put at the head of the dance ground and are
561 shown the various lower age-grade types of totems by the old men (see list of totems, pages 39-51). They cannot see the ones that belong
784 to higher age grades. After they have looked upon the totems which
852 have been strongly taboo to them until this time, they must eat only bush food until after they are painted and have made presents to the leader. Looking at the totem serves as an initiation rite. After the boys have seen the totems, all the men dance once more to the main camp, where again the kingfisher ceremony is gone through with the women under their ainmaras.

196 *Native Interpretation.*—"When the turkeys come in, that means by
113 and by the Yiritja are coming up. Those fires are built all around. This is all the same as making a fire in the plain by those Wongar men. When Wongar men built the fires those Wongar turkeys came up too and looked."

196 H. The Men and Women Bathe Ceremonially

1. All the men, women, and children enter the sea and wash themselves.

1. When this is completed the women and children all run into

CHAPTER XI

AN INTERPRETATION OF MURNGIN TOTEMISM AND ITS RITUAL LOGIC

Analyses and Summaries of the Ritual Sections and the Myth-symbols of the Wawilak Ceremonies

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A review of the Wawilak rituals will be presented here, but for the time being we shall postpone a summary treatment of the Narra rites. The chapter will concern itself first with a general summary of the sections of the rituals as expressions of myth-symbols, in an endeavor to determine the meaning of the rituals mythologically. These totemic phenomena will then be related to the larger society in an effort to ascertain what are their ultimate meanings in Murngin culture. Let us first consider in order the four rituals of the Wawilak myth.

Djungguan

All but the last section of the Djungguan are dramatic expressions of the myth-symbol of the snake swallowing the two women. The natives clearly recognize this, as their interpretations indicate. 852 773

In the first section—The Preliminaries—the boys who are to be circumcised are told that the Great Father Snake wants their foreskins and is calling for them. The warngaitja is erected, which is later taken away by the men who symbolize the snake. Symbols are made which are used in later sections: the snake trumpet (Yurlunggur), the decoration of the boys to be circumcised, et cetera. This section represents the entrance of the snake. There is the constantly recurring symbolic theme of the effort made by the women to stop the snake.

In the second section (B), when the dances occur around the warngaitja, it is understood that the dancers are the snake which later takes the warngaitja and the boys to the men's ground. The third section (C) explicitly states that Yurlunggur comes out and swallows the women, while in the fourth (D) the snake swallows the animals as well as the women.

The fifth section (E)—the bloodletting—is by far the most important, for here the whole of the ideology of the myth is clearly stated

852 773 and interpreted in the ritual, with heavy emphasis on the profanemen of the pool by the women's menstruation blood and their being swallowed by the python. The ritual power of blood is demonstrated. Th last dances on the men's ground (F) symbolize the snake swallowin the women, as in the fourth section above, and some of the plants an animals collected and named by the women run away from them int the Mirrirmina well. Some of the dances also bring in the mino theme of the moiety ceremonial antagonism, Dua animals pretendin to fight Yiritja. The circumcision (G) has the snake-swallowing-the-women element, and is the fulfillment of the first section above, in which the boys are told the snake is calling for their foreskins.

The last section (H) is the one in which the initiates are finally purified and, by taking the communion of food (the sacred names of the various morsels of which they have been told), are finally made a part of the male group.

In brief, all the sections of the Djungguan except the last dramatize primarily the myth symbol of the snake swallowing the women.

Gunabibi

776 The mythological python in the Gunabibi ceremony is known as Muit. Muit is supposed to be more powerful than Yurlunggur. The old men say he is more powerful because his ceremony is greater. Muit is sometimes looked upon as the father of Yurlunggur, as the inner spirit of Yurlunggur. Generally the two are interchangeable. Most people say they are the same, though a strict Murngin philosopher, when giving the subject careful consideration, differentiates between the two pythons by associating Yurlunggur with the Djungguan rites and Muit with the Gunabibi and Ulmark.

852 773 The first section (A) is merely the preparation of the symbols for the two elements found in opposition throughout the myth: Mandelprindi, or the snake; and the boys and dancers who are the two women. The ritual of this section is part of the general snake-swallowing-the-women symbol. In the second section (B), Mandelprindi calls, the women answer, and the initiates are taken—i.e., the snake has taken them. The third section (C) again—in the whirling of Mandelprindi, the singing of the men and the reply of the women—symbolizes the swallowing. The dance sequence here offers another major symbol—that of reproduction and fertility and the cycle of the seasons. In the fourth section (D), the line of men who surround the women symbolizes the swallowing of the two Wawilak women. The rituals while

the messengers are gone (Section E), are once again symbolic of the swallowing. 852 773

The kartdjur (F) although it indirectly symbolizes the swallowing, is more concerned with the reproductive and seasonal cycle, with the animals' departure from the women and entrance into the python's pool. The rituals (G) surrounding the Yermerlindi totemic emblems symbolize the arrival of the snake and the swallowing of the women. The ceremonial exchange of wives (H) symbolizes the reproductive and seasonal cycle.

The ceremony centered around the forked sticks and ridgepole (I) is again the swallowing symbol. A minor symbol, however, is injected in this section: the flying fox, a symbol of death. He is considered a mokoi or trickster soul, personified by the young boys who hang on the rafter of the two old women and who are spiritually dead because they are yet to be completely initiated. They take food from the snake—the line of men seated on the ground by the ridgepole; they join on to the male body of the snake by seating themselves in the row of men, which symbolizes their becoming a part of the higher age grade of men.

The final section (J) is not symbolic from the myth point of view except that the two women went through a similar performance of painting with red ocher.

Sections A through E, as well as G and I, all symbolize the snake's swallowing the women. The last section (J) is merely a ritual mechanism to relate the dancers once again in a normal way to their ordinary society and to prevent any harm coming to them from having been in touch with the sacred Gunabibi. Sections F and H, as well as, secondarily, part of C and of E, depict the cycle of fertility as expressed in reproduction, seasonal fluctuation, and periods of plenty and scarcity; and these again are directly expressed in the animals and plants starting out singly, then mating, copulating, and having offspring at wet seasons of the year. Briefly stated, the snake-swallowing-the-women symbol dominates the greater part of the Gunabibi; another major theme is introduced which is concerned with the cycle of reproduction; and minor themes of naming the plants and animals and of their running away are introduced (see final summary of the four great ceremonies below).

Ulmark

In the first section the four kangaroos' running away symbolizes the 884 773

Marndiella

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773 The Marndiella symbolism, like the ceremony itself, is unelaborated. The first section is concerned merely with preparing the boys by ceremonially dressing them like women for the important reason of identifying them with the women's social group. The bloodletting of Section B (found in full detail in the corresponding section of the Djungguan) ritualizes the profanation of the pool and the swallowing of the women by the snake. The flying-fox motif of the spiritually dead brought to life by the ritual is indirectly referred to.

The women's mat dance (Section C) identifies the initiate with the two Wawilak women, and covering him with the ainmara (woman's mat) symbolizes his place in the age grading. In this section we also find the snake swallowing the women.

The dog dance of Section D is one of the most difficult to interpret fully. The dog smelling the initiates means they are "all the same as animals and he is going to catch them." (Dog is best understood in the several myths in which he becomes a symbol of black men generally and therefore of the male group.) The significant fact here is that the boys are symbolical of ritually unclean food.

The blood-smeared, torch-bearing line of men of the fifth section, E, are snakes, and dance around the Wawilak women to symbolize swallowing them. In the last section, F, the initiates are circumcised and steamed exactly as in the Djungguan, and the same symbolism holds here.

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884 The analyses of the four ceremonies show that in addition to the fundamental snake-swallowing-the-women symbol, the Gunabibi brings in also the reproductive cycle and seeing-and-naming-the-food-animals symbols. The Ulmark adds the animals-running-away-from-the-unclean-women symbol. The concluding segments of the Marndiella, Djungguan, and Ulmark bring in a communion, as does the Gunabibi in the flying-fox episode; the communion in the first three seems fairly separate from the general myth-symbols, but in the Gunabibi is part of the snake ideology.

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Summary of the Ritual Logics of the Wawilak Configuration[1]

If we let

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M stand for myth

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[1] This same procedure could be followed for the other sections and subsections of the myth, including the women naming the animals and the coming from the south, also the animals running away from the women.

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- B for the section of the myth in which the python swallows the women
- C for ceremony
- D for Djungguan
- G for Gunabibi
- U for Ulmark
- M for Marndiella

and allow lower-case letters corresponding with upper-case letters of the sections to stand for those sections, we can say

$$M_B = C_D(a \ldots g), C_G(a \ldots e, g \ldots i), C_U(b \ldots i, p \ldots t), C_M(c, e \ldots f).$$

The ideology of the first section of the Wawilak myth (M_A)—the coming of the two sisters from the southern interior and the flight of the food animals—although latent in a great number of the sections, appears explicitly only in G(c), G(e, f) and in U(a, c, i, m, o, p). Omission of symbolical relation of certain sections to the myth is due to lack of material.

Obviously the testimony of the natives itself has manifest in its content a great amount of interpretative material which most emphatically demonstrates that the Wawilak myth is no meaningless tale concerned with a purely mythological history of the aboriginal peoples of the area; and this evidence again proves that the dances performed have a deeper significance to the natives' own consciousness than mere aesthetic expressions or religious formulae. All four of the rituals definitely are related to the fundamental Wawilak myth and have their symbolic point of reference there. Each of the dance and song elements refers to a myth-symbol found within the Wawilak dramatic story. The Wawilak myth-rituals are, speaking generally, sacred dramas in which the mysteries of life are enacted. The same is true for the Djunkgao myths and Narra rituals; but rather than confuse our thinking by dealing with too many variables at one time, we shall postpone our interpretation of the Narra rituals until we deal further with the Wawilak story. Since the Djungguan, Gunabibi, Ulmark and Marndiella are the most important rituals, and since in them the one symbol of the snake-swallowing-the-women seems to dominate all the others, the core of our problem of meaning lies here, and we shall give it our first attention.

821 depths. When the snake rises and swallows the women the waters c
825 the earth cover the dry land, and the snake does not fall until th
773 southeastern monsoon blows. He falls and the earth is dry agai
776 "He was looking for dry land to put [regurgitate] them on." Th
rain stops, the waters recede, and the earth dries while the south eastern monsoon blows. In the myth, then, its blowing is the comin of the dry season. The snake falls and regurgitates what he has eaten as do the other snakes. The period of want when little food is avail able is over, for the wet season has "spit up" what it has swallowed i its waters. The women and the other animals swallowed are in this symbolism. The reproductive and "food-giving" parts of nature are by inference—but not, so far as I could determine, in the consciousness of the Murngin—the dry season. The great primeval flood is merely a dramatic enlargement of what takes place every year when the torrential tropical rains flood the lands, cover the earth, and bring want where there was plenty.

THE WAWILAK MYTH AND RITUAL AND MURNGIN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

821 The "swallowing" of the earth by the rainy season is known to be
825 caused by the wrong actions of the two Wawilak women in copulating
773 incestuously with their own clansmen and by the older sister's later
852 profaning the pool of the sacred python. This is not considered an unmixed calamity, however, because the rain and water bring the plants and bulbs and flowers which are consumed directly by man or provide pasturage for kangaroo, opossum, and other animals eaten by man. In other words, the Murngin see the snake's swallowing the women and animals as necessary and part of the scheme of things, and their testimony clearly demonstrates the causal relation between the actions of the Wawilak women and the seasonal cycle. The cycle of nature is a necessary one, in which man has ordinary and extraordinary rôles to play. In the ordinary rôle he "walks about single, by and by mielk, by and by yoto," as do all the other animals; and in the extraordinary rôle he is pledged by the Wawilak women to continue producing the great rituals because of their original sins and to purify man and his society. These ceremonies are designed to aid nature, or possibly it would be better to say to restrain man from preventing by his unclean actions the coming of the dry season of plenitude. This is why the young man who refuses to copulate with the woman in the fertility rite of the Gunabibi is scolded and told that he will be sick and make his partner ill. And this is why the whole

Gunabibi or any of the other ceremonies must be completed; scarcity 821
and sickness are likely to result if it is not. 825

The snake, then, in this symbolism of nature, is the wet season, and
his actions become significant because he swallows the dry season and 773
regurgitates it, which brings a period of plenty. 852 ●

A number of additional elements to this symbol are suggested by the four myths. The women are swallowed because of their unclean acts. When the various ceremonial elements are listed, the snake is found to be played almost always by the men, and the Wawilak sisters by the women, uninitiated children, and those who are being initiated.

Initiated and uninitiated meet frequently on the border line of the general camp (to which the women are ceremonially restricted) and the men's grounds. At times the men invade the ground of the women. The formal grouping of the women and children and of the initiated men is emphasized by this spatial arrangement.

In all instances the male snake (Bapa Indi, Father Big) is a ritualization of the male section of society, and the Wawilak sisters who by their uncleanness have provoked the snake (men) into swallowing them are the unritualized or profane sections of the tribe, i.e., the women and uninitiated boys. The only exceptions to this generalization occur when men take the rôle of women on the men's ground from which women are barred. This brings us, I think, to a deeper level of the great Murngin rituals. The men's age grade is a snake and purifying element, and the sociological women's group is the unclean group. The male snake-group in the act of swallowing the unclean group "swallows" the initiates into the ritually pure masculine age grade, and at the same time the whole ritual purifies the whole group or tribe.

The snake is the fertilizing principle in nature according to Murngin symbolism; this explains why it is identified with the men's group rather than with the women; otherwise one would suppose that the male principle, being identified with the positive higher social values, would be associated by the Murngin with the dry season—the time of the year of high social value.

Seven institutions found in Murngin society are the elementary 61
family, the extended kinship structure, the tribe, the clan, the moiety, 771
the subsection, and the horde. The tribe and the horde are amorphous unities which have no formal structure. The unstable elementary family and extended kin groups are organized into larger formal unities by the clan, moiety, and subsection systems. The totemic system

771 182 and the profanation of the sacred pool. The general activity of nature, that is, the alternation of the seasons, is the effect of man's uncleanliness in the mythologic past and in the present, as the Djunkgao interpretations will later demonstrate. It is therefore necessary continually to cleanse the group and its individuals of all social uncleanliness. This is the function of the Narra rites and of the Garma, Marndiella, Djungguan, Gunabibi, and Ulmark.

That which organizes the two categories (the seasonal reproductive cycle of nature and the male-cleanliness female-impurity dichotomy of society) into one is the totemic symbol which can be manipulated by ritual and gives man an effective control over nature and an effective negative sanction over the members of his society. The rituals must be properly conducted yearly to keep the group and its individuals ritually clean; and in these rituals the manipulation of the sacred totem insures the proper function of the seasons, a sufficient production of food, and a continuation of the natural surroundings proper for man. Thus that which is beyond man's technology or beyond his real powers of control becomes capable of manipulation because its symbols can be controlled and manipulated by the extraordinary powers of man's rituals. At the same time the identification, in the totemic concept, of the male and female principles with the seasonal cycles gives the adult men's group the necessary power to enforce its sanctions; the providing world of nature will not function if the rules of society are flouted and man's uncleanliness contaminates nature. Hence everyone must obey. If he does not by his own volition, then he must be forced to, by restriction of his larger participation in the group (as, for example, barring him from higher age grades until he behaves himself); or by the direct sanction of clan feud; or, within the clan, by allowing the offending member to be killed by another clan. As we have said, the women's sociological group and women as physiological beings are thus subordinate to the men's group, and the Murngin age-grading system has been built on this principle. Like other Australian tribes, this peoples' "political" control might be termed a gerontocracy, but it is more than merely the rule of old men.

182 773 ●852 The analysis of the four myths shows that, besides the fundamental snake-swallowing-the-women symbol, the Gunabibi uses the reproductive cycle, and the Ulmark the animals-running-away-from-the-unclean-women as important motifs. The concluding acts of the Marn-

diella, Djungguan and Ulmark introduce communion rites, as does 182
the Gunabibi, in the flying fox episode. The communion in all of the 773
rituals except the Gunabibi seems fairly differentiated from the gen- 852
eral symbols, but in the Gunabibi it is part of the snake idea (the initiate becomes part of the snake in the dance).

The animals-running-away-from-the-women myth-symbol given primary expression in a number of the Ulmark segments is also of secondary interest in the Djungguan and Gunabibi. The interpretation of the snake-swallowing-the-women symbol gives a sufficient understanding of the Wawilak myth to fit the animals-running-away symbol into its place. The animals leave the women and jump into the python's pool because the women are ritually impure. They arise from the pool and roar like snakes. The animals here are symbolically taken into the snake's totem well and made clean by their immersion, which is demonstrated by their roaring and acting like the snake. Further, they are being swallowed by the wet season. In the Gunabibi also the animals are running away from the women and are being made clean in the well. In the Ulmark the rainy season theme is made more explicit by having the men remove all their ornaments and clothing and shave to resemble men emaciated from lack of food. This occurs in the first section after the animals (kangaroos) have run away. It seems a possible hypothesis that the Djunkgao loss of the totems and the Wawilak loss of the animals are analogous and to the native mind, in general, the same thing. This was not told to me specifically of Murngin dogma by the native interpreters, but was often said generally about the Wawilak and Djunkgao myths and the behavior of the two sets of sisters.

The Gunabibi directly introduces the further theme of the re- 182
productive cycle. In the Djungguan, Marndiella, and Ulmark it is 773
subsumed under the general seasonal cycle, but in the Gunabibi it 852
has a definite part of its own in the symbolization; and when the 831
reproductive cycle does find expression in the song and dance symbols the seasonal cycle is understood to lie within it as a part of the process of reproduction. It can be said that part of the fundamental structure of the Gunabibi is the expression of reproductive activities in symbolical detail. First only the male animals dance, then only the females, then the two simulate copulation; and when the human species perform, they actually copulate ceremonially. The ceremonial aspect of copulation is emphasized by the exchange of tribal brothers'

182 wives; repetition of ordinary profane sexual relations of spouses would
773 lack the dramatic force of the copulation of strange mates.

852 (Incidentally, the fact that the copulation of animals is simulated
by male dancers and that the human symbols of reproduction ac-
831 tually copulate demonstrates once more how the rituals symbolically
manipulate functions of nature which cannot be directly controlled,
whereas the direct form of expression is exercised when possible.)

The reproductive symbol is related point by point to the seasonal symbol by the knowledge of the seasons when the animals go about not paired, but singly, and the time of year mating and reproduction take place. The reproductive cycle of mating and birth is manifest in most of the sections of the four Wawilak ceremonies, is explicitly stated in the Gunabibi symbolism, and is latent in the concept of the season's fluctuation. The emphasis of interest in natural phenomena is shifted slightly from the seasonal variation as the organizing principle of all nature's complexities to the reproductive behavior of the animals and plants, which again generalizes on all the activities of nature. In brief, the concepts of the reproductive cycle and seasonal alternation state the same generalization and are given the same symbols in the myth.

The Gunabibi, by bringing the reproductive cycle into explicit symbolical statement in a number of segments, by retaining in others the usual seasonal symbols, and by combining seasonal and reproductive symbols in still others, gives us a better understanding of the Murngin concepts of the order of natural phenomena. The fertility of the plant and animal species is seen to be in a time relationship, and this order of time is conceived as a seasonal one. This gives us a more elaborate knowledge of the general thinking which underlies the two sister myths and Murngin totemism in general. Furthermore, the Gunabibi ritual completely demonstrates the fact that the Murngin realize the necessity of sexual intercourse as part of the reproductive cycle.

182 When the Liaalaomir python says, "I see we talk a different lan-
guage—it is better then that we all have the same ceremonies together
852 for we own the same maraiin," he is stating a fundamental fact of the
773 Murngin social structure. What he is saying is that the clans ("dif-
ferent languages") tend to break down the larger unity with their
open or suppressed antagonisms, and the ceremonies and totems tend
to establish unity through the underlying agency of the rituals and
myths in which Yurlunggur appears.

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Island when a man died but I could see no spirit. I think that is a lie." 775

The father of the dead man or some other near relative has a large cake of palm-nut bread made by the women and divides this food among the members of his own moiety and those of the mother's group. This is supposed to force the dead soul to leave because he is not participating with the rest in the communion. Everyone is afraid to have the soul linger about the camp because it might go looking for fish and turtle and other animal food and frighten these animals away so that the living could not kill them.

The father or other relatives then build a small fire, gather and place on it bunches of green leaves until they are smoking, and then brush them over the bodies of all the people, both male and female, who are relatives of the dead person, with the purpose of chasing away the soul of the dead. This ceremony may be involved with a considerably longer ritual or may consist of the mere brushing of the smoking leaves on the bodies of the relatives.

After the garma fire ritual, mokul bapa, yeppa and mari (male and female) talk among themselves and then to the body and to its dead mari's and old marikmo's souls which are supposed to be by it. "Don't you cause trouble and get angry with us. We are only going to keep this dead man a little while, then we are going to give him to you and you can keep him, but don't you cause trouble." Sometimes the father or near relative dreams that the old grandfather has come to him and has said that he now should be in control of the new soul and wants that soul immediately.

The Garma or Main Camp Ceremony.—Since the various types of garma rituals are interwoven in all parts of the mourning ceremonies it seems best to digress a moment and describe all of them at once. The garma type of ceremony is found among all the clans of the tribes studied (except possibly the Liagaomir and Naladaer clans). The garmas are primarily for mortuary ceremonies but can be used for circumcisions. There is a considerable geographical variation in the kinds of garmas, particularly between those of the tribes centered around the western shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria and those among the peoples along the Glyde River. There is also a clan variation, since the various clans include in their cycle of songs objects which are of immediate significance to the clan. The clan variation is very slight, however, and usually for the purpose of including references to the totemic well and the objects surrounding it. There is a rather consider-

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121 127 V. Application of the Douglass tree-ring method.[2] This was attempted unsuccessfully in an effort to date more exactly Malay intrusion into North Australia by examining the growth rings of the tamarind trees which were brought to the shores of the Arafura and the Gulf of Carpentaria by the Malay traders.

Observation of Certain Historical Processes

177 852 The Gunabibi is not found in any of the clans around Arnhem and Buckingham Bays or among the island peoples of the northeast; but large numbers of the men from these districts go south to the clans that have this ceremony and participate there. Certain features of the Gunabibi are not observed by these northern visitors, particularly the exchange of wives since they do not bring their wives with them. The Gunabibi is thought of as a southern and western ceremony. Leaders from the Rainbarngo come to the Goyder River country to assist in its direction. The Liaalaomir and surrounding clans, however, have it as an organized part of their ceremonial life. The process of diffusion, as it is observable in this case, has two elements in it: (1) the clans on the edges of its distribution tend to assimilate it, and (2) the clans farther away tend to accept it in that their men go to its celebrations, which means that a large group of men are Gunabibi initiates in areas where it is not a part of the total clan behavior. Because of its distribution among the more remote northern clans and simultaneous contacts with the general distribution of the Gunabibi, this rite is diffusing very rapidly and promises to cover the whole of the Murngin area within the next few years.

The rapidity of its diffusion is aided by the operation of a cultural selective factor: the ceremony itself is but a slight variation of the Djungguan and is dependent on the same Wawilak myth for its logic. It also emphasizes with greater clarity and satisfaction the ideas of fertility latent or explicit in all the large Murngin rituals; this would tend to make it attractive and exciting to their thinking and emotions and make them see it as "more inside" (that is, the further inside the men's ceremonial grounds one goes, the more sacred the mysteries become).

177 852 304 In the Roper River area the Gunabibi is associated with subincision but in the northern Murngin area it is not. Subincision is diffusing into this area as a part of the general complex, but is not a ritual element; and it is treated by the people who accept it as a separate custom, although they know that it is a part of the general Gunabibi configuration in the south. It seems probable that, in no great length of time, the two will be reassociated because the subincision songs are sung at the present time in the

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[2] Douglass, Andrew E., "Dating Our Prehistoric Ruins; How Growth Rings in Timbers Aid in Establishing the Relative Ages of the Ruined Pueblos of the Southwest," *Natural History*, 1921, Vol. XVI, pages 27-30.

Gunabibi sequences and many of the men and the leaders who sing them 177
are at present subincised.[3]

The ceremonial life of the Murngin seems to be constantly enriched by 852
cultural waves coming from the south—that is, from Central Australia— 304
as will be demonstrated when we examine their burial customs from an historical point of view. The technological borrowings, of recent times at least, are from the seacoast and not from the inland. We must turn to the Malay contacts to see what traits have been taken and by what cultural processes they have been chosen from the contact of the Malay traders from the north and west.

Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of Northeastern Arnhem Land

The Malays, from an early date, made yearly voyages down through the 175
East Indian Islands and through the Arafura Sea to the northern coast of Australia. Their prows sailed into many harbors and river mouths that indent the coast, from the Victoria River, which flows into the Indian Ocean in West Australia, to the southern limits of the Gulf of Carpentaria in the east.

Sir Matthew Flinders, in the second volume of his *Voyage to Terra Australis*, reports having seen first evidences of the Malays in the Pellew Islands.[4] He next speaks of them when he was anchored at Caledon

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[3] The people to the south and west of the Murngin practice subincision. It seems 171
to have a distribution that projects up the Goyder River to the Crocodile Islands. The following people practice it; Rainbarngo, the people around Cape Stewart, the Djinba, Ritarngo, the Marunga Island people (some do, some do not—it is a matter of personal choice), and the Burera (a matter of personal choice). None of the people east of them go through this ordeal except a few who have made long visits to the people west and south of them and have gone through the Gunabibi ceremony. In the more northern parts of the subincision distribution the cutting is unritualized. Two men go out and stand in a river or pool to above their waists. One takes a sharp stone knife and splits the urethra of the other; either at the same time or later, the one who has been cut reciprocates by performing the same operation on his friend. Farther south, subincision is a definite part of the Gunabibi ceremony. Clitoridectomy also seems to be practiced in this ceremony by these southern peoples. It seems likely that if other factors do not disturb the culture, the subincision element of the Gunabibi will spread into northeastern Arnhem Land and become a part of the ritual within this area. Many of the people at the present day sing a subincision song as part of the ceremony even though they do not go through the ordeal.

[4] Page 172—"Pellew Group: December, 1802: Indications of some foreign people having visited this group were almost as numerous, and as widely extended as those left by the natives. Besides pieces of earthen jars and trees cut with axes, we found remnants of bamboo lattice work, palm leaves sewed with cotton thread into the form of such hats as are worn by the Chinese, and the remains of blue cotton trowsers, of the fashion called moormans. A wooden anchor of one fluke, and three boats' rudders of violet wood were also found; but what puzzled me most was a collection of stones piled together in a line, resembling a low wall, with short lines running perpendicularly at the back, dividing the space behind into compartments. In each of these

no other ornamentation upon it. The red ocher is not only for decoration, 415
but it adds spirit "power" to the receptacle. 293

East of the Goyder River the bag is used exclusively by the medicine man, whose spirit helpers reside in it. West of the Goyder River it is also [177]
worn by anyone who so desires for good luck in hunting. Here also it is held in the teeth during a fight to add magical powers and bravery to the fighter.

Fighting "Tie."—Sometimes a "tie" is carried in the mouth to gain 777
power during a fight. The tie is made by the same technique as the spirit bag. It is made of coarse vegetable fiber string, is flat, about eighteen inches 293
long and three inches wide, and has a fiber string handle which allows the owner to wear it around his neck when not in use. It has ornamental value, although it is never decorated except with alternating bands of dark and light fiber.

The netting stitch is not used in the making of bags or the tie in this [286]
area as it is in Queensland.

Forehead Bands.—This article of ornamentation is made of small thread- 301
like string with a mesh that is a sixteenth of an inch in diameter. Its length and width correspond to the size of the wearer's forehead. It is worn only by males. Each end of the band has a string attached to it for tying at the back of the head. The bands are used in the Gunabibi, Ulmark, and [852
Djungguan ceremonies. They are covered with a solid layer of white pipe 884]
clay or red ocher. Sometimes bands are made of paper bark tied with fiber string and painted with red ocher or white clay.

Women's and Children's "Harness."—This curious body ornament used by women and small children looks, when worn, much like a harness used for hitching horses to a carriage. It is composed of one continuous strand [283]
of twelve to eighteen strings of two-ply vegetable fiber. The string is formed into two large equal loops which are joined by wrapping with fiber string for a distance of about ten inches. Each loop is then wrapped separately for from two to five inches from both sides of the joint. The wrapped sec- [531]
tions are usually painted with alternating white and red or yellow and red bands of paint. The unwrapped string frequently is covered with red ocher.

Women and children wear the harness during ceremonies. The wrapped portion falls down the middle of the back; the arms are slipped through the loops which are made to cross below the breast.

Bugle-grass Necklace.—The bright straw-yellow bugle grass is cut into small beads about one-half inch in length and strung on a thin vegetable fiber string. The string is then looped back and forth to form about [283]
eighteen lengths of ten inches each. To each of the two ends of the bunch of loops is attached a single fiber string. The beads are worn against the throat by tying the fiber strings at the back of the wearer's neck. Men, women, and children wear these ornaments. The bright yellow is particularly effective in contrast with the gleaming black skin of the aborigines.

gathered some sweat from it. He then put it on the neck of both the Yiritja and the Dua flying foxes. They could speak then. 773x

They were just the same as man is now. An old man must always put sweat on a young man after he has been initiated or he cannot talk. (This explains "why" old men put sweat on the men before the Narra ceremony starts. This is also "why" the sweat of an old man is put on the eyes of the young men just before they see the dances of the Djungguan ceremony.) [852] ●

UDAL PEOPLE

Inside the world there are plenty of black men. They sit down inside. We live on the top. Our old people think that up above in the stars there is another world. This one we live on is a second world, and there is another one more inside than this one. The country inside this world is all the same as this one. Up above Wongar men live and here ordinary men live and below, men who are almost like men live. These men have very big teeth and a very large mouth. 772

EMU AND JABIRU

In the old days Emu and Jabiru were gawel and waku to each other. Emu was sitting in his camp making spears. After a time he had a large bundle of them. His son-in-law came along and sat down by him. Emu, sometime before, had given him his daughter for a wife. Jabiru said to Emu, "Gawel, I am going to look for sting ray. I think it would be nice for us to have some of them to eat." 773x

"All right," said Emu, "you go ahead and go out and get some, for I should like to have some too. Take my daughter with you."

Jabiru and Emu's daughter went out in a canoe and speared an abundance of fish. After they caught them they took out the prong from the tail of each sting ray and carried them back to land. Jabiru took out all the fat and those parts of the intestines prized as delicacies and cooked them in shells. He left the lean meat to one side. After the fat had cooked he ate it. He took the lean meat and put it in several large baskets and carried them back to the camp. There was no fat on any of this meat. Emu's daughter said, "Husband, what are you doing? You have eaten all the fat and the best part of the sting ray and left none for my father. He is not a dog. He cannot be treated that way."

Jabiru said contemptuously, "Oh, I don't mind. Didn't I catch them myself, so didn't they belong to me?"

When they got near the camp Jabiru's children and Emu's son were playing together. The children said, "Here comes our father. He has plenty of food."

Emu saw them coming and said, "Oh, we are going to have all we can eat of sting ray." Jabiru, when he got to the camp, left his spears against a tree; he left his basket with the meat in it by the spears. He told his

852
292
302

[p.558 F]

VIA. Yermerlindi, the Python's Emblems in the Gunabibi.

VIb Preparing a Dancer for the Gunabibi Ceremony.
(*See Section C 1, page 293.*)

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

Three of the message sticks from Yirrkalla were unidentified, Fig. 68C, D, Fig. 66A, B, and Fig. 67A, F. They are included to indicate additional designs employed on the message sticks of that locality. 211 532*

(b) CEREMONIAL MESSAGE STICKS

The Man, Buma-buma, of Trial Bay

At Wialpa, Trial Bay,[50] during mythical times, an old *dua* man, *Bouka-baluwuru*, instructed his son, *Buma-buma*, to go to an adjacent group of aborigines and bring back with him two boys who were due to be circumcised. When *Buma-buma* reached the distant camp he demanded, in the name of his father, two girls instead of two boys. Though the old men agreed to the demand, they were somewhat suspicious of the unusual request. On nearing Wialpa, *Buma-buma*, hiding the girls in the jungle, told his father that the old men of the distant people wanted at least another year before their youths were ready for circumcision. The father, who did not believe that story, demanded more and further more details, until *Buma-buma* was forced to admit he had brought girls instead of boys. The men, and especially the father, were so enraged over *Buma-buma's* disobedience and its consequent disgrace that they speared the young man to death. After the burial rituals of *Buma-buma*, the men at Wialpa were so ashamed of his actions that they changed themselves into water-birds, which still live in the nearby fresh-water swamps. 211 532* 775*

At the present time the ceremonial message stick, on which the figure of *Buma-buma* is engraved, is sent to a group of aborigines who have a boy ready for circumcision.[51] Although the designs on the stick refer specifically to the death and burial of *Buma-buma*, and not to circumcision, the myth of *Buma-buma's* disobedience and punishment is so well known that the significance of the message stick is understood. [202] [304]

Figure 65E is the obverse side and Fig. 65F the reverse. On Fig. 65E the dead body of *Buma-buma*, wrapped for burial, occupies the central position. The spears, which had been thrust into his side, are at *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. The group of lines, *e*, are *dua* men and *f*, *jiritja* men, who are taking part in the burial rituals. The short lines, *g*, at the top of the message stick are the *jiritja* and *h*, at the bottom, the *dua* men, who are chanting the songs of burial. All these men have since been changed into water-birds. The designs on panel *j* refer to the paper-bark wrapping of the corpse.

The reverse side, Fig. 65F, shows *Buma-buma* when the decomposition is complete and the people have assembled to transfer his bones to the temporary bark coffin. The main lozenge-shaped design is the paper-bark wrapping round the corpse, which is now a skeleton. On the left at *a* is a *dua* man, *Biribirit*, with a bark coffin at his feet, and at *b* a *jiritja* man, also standing on a bark

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[50] Map, Fig. 57.

[51] In north-eastern Arnhem Land the boys are circumcised when they are about eight years of age. [852]

[text continues on p. 473]

primitive races. After the age of six or seven years the children very largely pass out of the direct care of their actual parents, and become part of the tribal group. Quite frequently they will spend weeks and months away with other members of the horde, but no concern is felt on their behalf. They are the children of the clan rather than of their actual parents. 000 854 858 614

At about the age of nine or ten the boys are taken away from the care of the women and the companionship of the younger children, and are prepared by the men for their initiation into the real life of the tribe. The chief feature of initiation in this area is the rite of circumcision, which is universally practised in East Arnhem Land. This actual ceremony is followed by a period of instruction, during which the boys are acquainted with their "marlk," or sub-section, their "jungoin," or totem, and the various laws and tabus designed to regulate their lives as members of the tribe. 852 [304] [867]

There is in this area no initiation ceremony for girls, who, for the main part, accompany the women in their search for food, and generally become acquainted with the duties which they will be required to perform in later life. [852] 857 868

In this district the children have nothing in the way of organised games, and for the main part find their amusement in the imitation of the doings of their elders. The boys arm themselves with the strong stalks of the long tropical grasses, and, taking sides, engage in strenuous spear fights. The girls play at cooking, the building of little humpies, and the nursing of babies represented by small bundles of paper bark. Both sexes join in elaborate mourning ceremonies over a dead bird or young animal, breaking off their wailing to indulge in hearty bursts of laughter. Life for them, during their early years, is happy, care-free, and undisciplined.

159 when we grew larger we did find out and some of us became sweethearts.
864 Even today these old sweethearts still get food from us and we get food
and presents from them (pages 74-92).

159 When I was a little bit bigger, after I was circumcised, we little boys
857 always made fish spears and we always carried them with us. We hunted
868 birds and fish with them. Sometimes we hit a bird, and often we caught
small fish. We learned then to carry our baskets over our shoulders, under
our arms, just like grown men do, just as our sisters learned to carry their
baskets over their foreheads.

159 When a boy gets a little bit large and he has been circumcised, he sleeps
591 with other boys and the unmarried men and he stays away from his father's
and mother's camp most of the time. It is no good for young people around
where married people are. They learn too much. They see women too much.
Sometimes you see these boys sitting down in a camp with the women.
They are not learning the way to live properly. It is all right when they play
around in their own camp and they eat there and sleep there (page 127).

Mahkarolla's Circumcision

159 One day I went with an older brother down through the Barlamomo
852 country to Blue Mud Bay to invite them all to come up to my country for
my circumcision (pages 259-290).

When I came back from the Blue Mud Bay country many of our relatives came with me. They brought many presents. My father took me and gave me to a man who painted me very pretty with many colors. I was afraid but I tried not to show it. I looked like I did not care what happened. I was a little bit pleased, too. I was afraid because I did not understand what was going to happen to me. I did not know it then, but my father had given that man a present to paint the picture of my totem well on my breast and belly, and also to put some of my totems (symbols) on me to get me ready (page 262).

When the old men painted me for my circumcision ceremony they put kangaroo teeth stuck in beeswax on a string and tied it around my forehead. The teeth hung on my forehead over my nose.

When some of the old men were away I asked some of the little boys what they were going to do, and one of them said he thought they were going to cut me. I was very frightened. My father had taken me a little way away from the main camp where the women stay and had brought me part way to the sacred camp of the python, where only men can go. This also frightened me.

When I heard the little boys say the old men were going to cut me I sneaked away from the little boys' camp and ran to my mother. It was

nighttime when I heard this and I thought if I went to my mother she 159
would hide me and I could sleep. I asked her to hide me under her sleeping 852
mat. She put me there but said I would have to be cut. She said all men had to have that done to them for it was like that (page 261).

Next day, when it was time for me to be circumcised, my galles, who were big men, caught me and took me from my mother. All the women got spears and they pretended to fight the men. They threw spears without spear-throwers. They did not hurt anybody. It was a little bit like fun. I thought, "Those women are fighting for me." It made me feel good. The men made a ring around me and took me. They chased the women away. I was taken to the sacred ground of the great Bapa Indi, where the men held their ceremonies to celebrate the fact that they were Dua (pages 29-33).

I thought I was going to see a real python. When I stood and looked at the leaves and piled up earth that surrounded the dance ground I thought that big snake would come out there. I stood at the head of the ground with another little boy who was also going to be circumcised and two old men stood beside us (pages 265-266). Two dancers came. They were all painted, but I was too little and I did not know what their paint meant. One old man said they were Wongar kangaroos (pages 271-274). He also said, "When you get through with this ceremony you can't talk any more to any of your
people except your father and your mari and to the little boys." He said [867]
if I did talk a little bird which was all the same as a spirit would listen to me and come and tell all the old men and the old men would kill my mari and my mother and kill me. They would have a bad medicine and do it.

All the dancers who come out in the circumcision ceremony appeared. 159
While they came the two old men told me the story of the two Wawilak 852
sisters who made the world and our life the way they are today (pages 869
250-259). In one of the dances several old men ran at us little boys, holding spears in their spear-throwers and pretending they were going to kill us with them. We were very afraid but we did not show it. We stood still. Then they told us that this was the way Wangurri people were and this was the way our fathers and our grandfathers had always acted and that they had never been afraid and they always had been great fighters. After this they took us away, back to the bush which separated the men's ceremonial ground from the main camp of the women. Some old men stayed with us. When we had been there a few moments we could hear the roar of Yurlunggur, the great Father Python of the Dua moiety (pages 265-266). He seemed very near. I tried not to tremble, but I was very afraid. The old men told me he was more than a real snake. He was a spirit. The old

159 men told me he was the great Father Python who had come in the spirit
852 and was made true for us black men at this ceremony for him. They said
869 when I grew older I could see him, but that now I was too little and that my eyes were not strong enough and that it took much "power" to look at him like old men must have when they see him.

159 After a little while I heard all the men calling out with some strange
852 sounds. I knew later that they were using the cry of a wedge-tailed eagle. They were beating their spears with their spear-throwers. They came nearer and nearer and finally two of them picked us up and put our legs around their necks and over their shoulders. We rode on their backs as we marched to the main camp where the women were. When they carried me on their shoulders I thought they were sure to kill me. I was more afraid. I held my head down and shut my eyes. I thought first, "Maybe they will kill me," then I would think, "No, maybe they are going to burn me." I would think back and forth like that. When we got in the women's camp they took me down from off the man's shoulders and one man lay down on the ground and I was placed on top of him and some other men held me with my legs spread apart so that I could not move. I cried and cried. Just before they did this one old man gave me a drink of water. When I started crying one of the men put a small basket in my mouth for me to bite on and so the women couldn't hear my crying. All the men had surrounded me and I was in the middle of a circle. I could hear the women crying while they danced around our circle (pages 286-288).

[304] One man took a stone spear and broke it and took a small piece of it and cut the skin from off the head of my penis. Then I was picked up and a man ran with me back to the men's ground. I was crying and crying, for I was very afraid and the cutting had hurt me. When we got near the men's ground he put me down by a small fire and took some water and washed where I had been cut and took his hands and put them over the fire and heated them and placed them over my penis. This made me feel much better. I was thirsty. I asked for water. The old men said that while we had been out in that ground the whole world had been covered with salt water again because the tide had come in and covered everything. There was no drinking water now, he said. They told me this for one day and would not let me drink. All that day I went without water; next day they gave me some (pages 287-288).

159 A day or two after I had been cut some old men took me, with my father,
783 to the men's ground. When we got there I found they had two logs laid
852 down and two more laid across them. They were placed over some stones that were as hot as fire. A big fire had been built over these stones to make them hot, before the logs were placed on top of them. All the old men were

sitting around singing. I was afraid again because I did not know what 159
they were going to do. I did not cry. I just looked down and said nothing. 783
They told me to stand up on the logs and squat down over the hot stones. 852
An old man stood by. He had some lily leaves that had been soaked in water. He threw the lily leaves on the hot stones. Steam came up all around me. This went inside my anus and into my body and all through it and came out my mouth. That is what those old men told me.

They told me it would make me very strong and clean me all out and make me all the same as the power song. I know now they did this for this reason and so that I wouldn't be greedy and could go a long time without food and without drink.

Two or three old men warmed their hands over the fire and put them to 159
my mouth and talked to me. They said, "You are no longer a baby. You 852
are growing up and going to be a big man. You must not swear at any- [867]
body. You must not lie. You must not chase after other men's wives."

Another old man rubbed my navel. He said, "This will make you very strong and you won't get hungry quickly and you won't try to eat too much food." One old man sat beside me. He picked up a piece of kangaroo. He said, "This one is not kangaroo. What do you call this one?" Another old man sat on the other side of me and whispered the power name of kangaroo in my ear. I called out the secret name of this food when I swallowed it. When I said this, all the old men who were sitting around in the men's chorus sang out, "Yai! Yai!"

That first old man then named all the kinds of foods that grow in the
bush and that are game and that are fish, and he said this same thing to me
and that other old man told me their power names. All the time the leader
beat his singing sticks and sang the sacred names of these foods. This was [198]
the first time I had ever heard the secret language which only we men
understand. No women hear these things. Women are profane and they [562]
would spoil them. These are things only for men to know. Children and
women are not strong enough (pages 288-290).

He Grows Up—A Foreign Woman Seduces Him

My father and I went to visit my nati's people at Elcho Island (map, 159
page 40). I was larger then, and my circumcision had been a few dry 648
seasons in the past. Some Macassar men were there, and they said that the white men were getting very mean and cheeky and that they were going to stop the Macassar men from coming. They said that this was their last voyage and they would never come again. They said that white men were all the same as animals and that they were big men and had hair on them and vere very fierce and they just killed people because they liked to kill.